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ISRAEL'S FAITH

A Series of Lessons — FOR THE — Jewish Youth

*Adapted from N. S. JOSEPH'S
"Religion, Natural and Revealed"*



BLOCH PUBLISHING CO.
NEW YORK 3 3 NINETEEN HUNDRED AND FIVE



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Israel's Faith

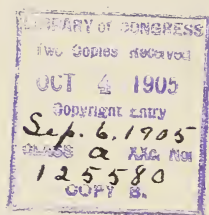
A SERIES OF LESSONS
FOR THE JEWISH YOUTH

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EDITOR'S NOTE.

IN 1879 Mr. N. S. Joseph, of London, published, under the title "Religion, Natural and Revealed: A Series of Progressive Lessons for Jewish Youth," an instructive guide-book of the tenets and principles of the Jewish Faith. Its popularity has been so well sustained in England that the present publishers, who have long been in quest of an adequate presentation of the teachings of Judaism for young readers, decided to reissue the book with such changes and modifications as were deemed necessary. Accordingly, the editor, to whom the delicate task of revision and adaptation was intrusted, undertook to prepare, for young American readers, an abridgment of the original work, which still remains, despite the rather voluminous literature on the subject, the only text-book in English fit to be placed in the hands of students. Much has been eliminated, no doubt, which is useful and even valuable to the advanced student, but great care has been taken to omit nothing likely to impair unity of thought or to affect lucidity of expression.

Both the style and the subject-matter will be found to be admirably graded, so as to suit the comprehension of the very young, as well as the growing intelligence of maturer minds. Altogether, it is a work of surpassing merit, and the publishers have done well in bringing it out in its present form, designed to meet the needs of Jewish children in progressive religious schools, where the study of the Jewish religion should be accorded a foremost place in the curriculum.

GEORGE ALEXANDER KOHUT.

NEW YORK, September 1, 1905.

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ISRAEL'S FAITH.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

THE EXISTENCE OF A GOD.

EVERYTHING in the world must have had a maker. You cannot imagine it possible that anything, however simple, made itself.

If I showed you a piece of stone, and told you that the stone made itself, you would laugh, and tell me that you could not believe such nonsense. And you would be quite right. You would tell me that the stone had no power to move, or to think, or to do anything—much less to make itself.

And if I showed you a plant, with some pretty flowers growing on it, and I told you that the plant made itself, you would laugh still more, and would say that you knew better. You would tell me, perhaps, that the plant had grown from a little seed, and that the little seed had come from another plant, just like the plant I was showing you, and that the first seed that ever became a plant, could never have been clever enough to make itself in such a wonderful way that the seed

should bring forth a plant, and the plant a flower, and the flower a seed, and the new seed a plant again, and so on, year after year, till now.

And if I showed you an animal—say a bird—and told you that the bird made itself, you would laugh at me again. You would say that the first bird could never have been clever enough to make itself in such a wonderful way; and that if the bird had made itself, it would have been clever enough to keep itself alive forever, which we know no animal can do. And of course you would be right.

But, suppose some one told you that all the world, as you see it, came by chance—that the mountains and valleys, the beautiful trees, and the sweet-smelling flowers, the beasts of the field, and men and women, and you too, *all came by chance*, you would think this idea still more laughable. You would say that chance never did anything in quite so orderly a fashion. You would call to mind that when you upset your box of toys by accident or by chance, the toys tumbled out in the greatest disorder, and you would have been very much astonished if it had been otherwise, for the things you see in the world are very regular and very orderly.

You never saw trees grow upside down, or the sun shine in the middle of the night, or anything heavy refuse to fall to the ground—all which might happen, *if things were arranged by chance*.

All the things we see around us on this beautiful Earth seem to be arranged for one *design* or purpose, for the good of every living being, and above all, of

man. And we know very well that if there is a design or purpose in anything, that thing cannot be said to be the work of chance, but must have had some one to design it.

I dare say you have, at some time or other, seen a steam-engine, and have thought it a very wonderful thing. Even if you look at it from a distance, as it almost flies along the iron rails, dragging after it cars piled with goods, or full of people, it seems a living wonder. But if you walk close up to it, while it is standing still, you will think it yet more wonderful. For you will see that it is made up of an enormous number of parts, some very strong, and some very delicate; and if you ask how many pieces there are in it, you will be told that there are nearly four thousand, and that each one of those four thousand pieces is necessary to make the great giant move. And then you will think to yourself how clever the men must be who could make such a wonderful machine.

And if any one were to tell you that the steam-engine came together by chance, or that it was not made by an intelligent or clever maker, you would tell him he was a stupid fellow to talk such nonsense. You would say: "I see here four thousand pieces of metal of different shapes and kinds, some large and some small, fitting into one another exactly. They could not possibly have come together by chance; there is design or intention in their being so put together as to enable the machine *to move*; consequently there must have been somebody to design and plan it, and that person, who-

ever he was, we call *the maker of the engine*, without whom that engine would never have been made." This would be a very sensible answer.

But now I am going to talk of engines much more wonderful than the steam-engine. Perhaps you may look at them with less wonder, because they make less noise; but if you observe them attentively, you will see in them even more to admire. The more you look, the more is there to be seen; and though, unlike the steam-engine, you will not find the maker's name written in letters of brass upon them, you will not be slow to find out who was the maker.

The sun, the moon, the stars, and the Earth on which we live are even more wonderful engines. And I call them engines, because they are known to move, to be always moving; not like the steam-engine, by fits and starts, when water is poured in and heat applied; but ever moving, ever working, never stopping to take rest, never even slackening speed for an instant.

Then, too, there are engines on the Earth itself, which we may examine more closely than we can the sun, moon, and stars—they are the animals that live on this Earth. Yes; these, too, are engines, and many of them have more parts than the steam-engine itself, and these parts are much less likely to get out of order, and they need fuel or food less frequently, and they are capable of repairing themselves over and over again, when they wear out or get damaged, till they get so old that there is hardly anything left worth repairing.

Let us take one of these living engines as an exam-

ple, one with which you are better acquainted than any other; namely—*yourself*.

You will remember that the steam-engine is a running-machine. It moves, and drags a train after it; but it can do nothing else. You, however, are something more. You are a reading and writing machine, a tasting and smelling machine, a seeing and feeling machine, a hearing and talking machine; but the greatest wonder of all is that this machinery of yours is under the control or management of a something within you, which you cannot see, and which is called the *Will*, and that this *Will* is guided by another unseen something within you, which we call *Reason*.

But as we can see neither the *Will* nor the *Reason*, we will let them alone for the present, and talk about *the machinery* only.

Look at your hand. How wisely it is fitted for its purpose! It can carry a heavy load of books, and it can thread the finest needle with the finest thread. It can hurl a baseball a very long way, and it can make the thinnest up-stroke with the finest pen. It can throw; it can carry; it can pull; it can push; it can lift; it can crush; it can bind; it can loosen. Look at that great stout workman. He has just been lifting a hundred-weight of grain with his brawny hands! Look at him now. He is using the same hand to take out a little particle of dust that has been blown into his fellow-workman's eye!

I called you just now an engine. I think I must have been wrong. Why, your hand alone is a hundred

engines all put together; for it can do a hundred *different* things, and many quite *opposite* things.

Just look at your hand, and ask yourself if you think it became a part of your body by chance, or without design or intention. Of course you will reply, that it was designed for the express purpose of doing all the things which we see it doing, just as the steam-engine was designed for the express purpose of *moving* and *dragging*. Therefore, we cannot help saying at least the same of the hand as we said of the steam-engine, that the hand must have had a very clever maker; and I think you would feel inclined to add that, as the hand is so much more wonderful than the steam-engine, and as no man, however clever, can make a true imitation of a hand with all its powers and movements, the maker of the hand must be far more clever than he who invented or made the steam-engine.

Now the hand is only one part of you. There are hundreds of other parts of the body quite as wonderful; and the more you look into these matters, the more you will see to admire, and the more certain you will become that the maker of all these wonderful contrivances of your body must be a Being of mighty skill.

But there are other animals which, so far as their bodies are concerned, are quite as wonderful. There is the elephant; for example, he has a trunk which can tear up a huge tree and can also pick up a pin. There is the camel, too, with an extra stomach, capable of holding enough spare water to enable him to travel a long distance, in the desert, without drinking.

There is not an animal that can be named, whose body is not truly wonderful in every point of its structure. And then, if we look more closely into the peculiarities and habits of each animal, we shall find how beautifully the body of each is suited to the climate in which it is to live: how some are clothed with fur, others with wool, others with bristles, according to the heat or cold to which each is likely to be subject.

Then, also, we see how wonderfully it is provided for that life should be preserved as long as possible. For example, we know that all animals are liable to accidental injuries, and that they would soon die if those injuries were not repaired. But we see that the animal has in itself the materials for its own cure. If part of a steam-engine be broken or damaged, engineers must come with tools to mend it. The engine cannot mend itself. But animals are machines that can and do mend themselves. If the skin be broken in a living animal, or the flesh torn, there is a substance produced by the wound itself which heals it. Even if the bone of a living animal be broken, the broken edges give forth a liquid which soon hardens into solid bone, making the broken parts, if placed together, stick to one another, and form one sound bone again.

Wherever we look we find something to admire, something to wonder at. I do not mean to say that we can always tell the design or object or use of everything, when we see it. But that is caused by our ignorance. At one time, people were much puzzled to know what could be the use of certain poisonous plants; but now

they have found out that these plants which destroy life may, if used in a particular way and in very small quantities, serve as medicines to cure disease and so preserve life. And thus it may be with many other poisons and many other things whose object we cannot at present understand. Perhaps, when the world becomes wiser, we shall know all about them too.

And, after all, those things which puzzle us are not the greatest or the most important points in the universe. The things we see every day are the greatest wonders. Sunrise and sunset, rain and snow, wind and hail, the change of the seasons, the growth of plants, and animals—lifeless seeds becoming living flowers; lifeless eggs becoming living birds; life everywhere, in the sea, in the fields, in the rivers, in the forests, in the air; living things made to last till their place is taken by other living things like themselves; and every one of these living things full of machinery which seems perfection—these are wonders indeed!

If the steam-engine must have had such a very clever maker, what shall we say of the World?

Do you know that, when I ask myself that question, I begin to have quite a poor opinion of the steam-engine? For I never knew a steam-engine to lay eggs, and bring forth a brood of little steam-engines, like yonder fine old hen with her large family of chickens. Nor did I ever know a steam-engine that was capable of doing anything else than *move*; nor did I ever know a steam-engine that was out of order, get itself in order again, without being doctored by an engineer.

And still the steam-engine is a very wonderful thing, and must have had a very clever maker.

Well, what shall we say of the World?

I am sure you will come to the conclusion, that the World and its contents must have had a maker possessed of an intelligence, power, and cleverness, to which the intelligence, power, and cleverness of the engine-maker cannot bear the least comparison.

This great and wonderful Maker of the World and its contents we call GOD; and what I have tried to prove to you is THE EXISTENCE OF A GOD, who designed and created the World.

CHAPTER II.

THE UNITY OF GOD.

PERHAPS you may ask, How am I to know that the world had only *one* Maker? How am I to know that there is only *one* God?

You might point to the steam-engine and tell me it was made by several makers, and then argue that each wonder of the World might have had a separate maker.

You would not be the first person to reason in this way. Indeed, in olden times, there were several nations who believed in almost any number of gods.

I am going to prove to you that these people were very foolish, and that it is right and reasonable to believe that there is only one God, the Creator of the whole World and of everything therein. This is what is meant by the Unity, or oneness of God.

Let us take another look at the steam-engine. Now, it is certainly true that the engine was made by several people; but one man only designed it. That is to say, there was one man only, who first made a drawing or picture of it before it was begun. And that same man it was, who decided how large it should be, and how strong it should be, how much weight it should be able to drag, how fast it should be able to run, and how

large and how small every one of the four thousand pieces of metal should be. And all the men who were employed in making the engine were just like so many machines, obeying the orders of the master engineer, not daring to disobey, but following exactly the picture or design he had set before them.

It was only by this strict obedience that the engine could ever have been finished, and turn out to be a moving machine; for if one of the workmen took it into his head to make one of the parts larger or smaller than was intended by the master engineer, the engine would have turned out weak or unruly, or, perhaps, would never have been able to move at all.

So you see, after all, the whole engine might be said to be the work of one man; for, in making it, the common workmen, who put it together, had no more to do with the *design* or *intention* than the miners who dug out of the earth the metals of which it was made.

Indeed, if we look at the finished steam-engine, we shall at once see that one man only must have had the arrangement of it. If it were not so, the enormous number of parts would not fit into one another so exactly.

It is this exact fitting of the various parts, all pointing to one object or intention, which makes us feel sure that, however many hands put the engine together, one master-mind designed or arranged it.

Now, if I can show you that the Earth, nay, that the whole World is, in this respect, just like the steam-engine, that every little or great part exactly fits into

some other part, and that each part, as well as the whole which is made up of the parts, points to one great object or design, you will believe that, no matter how many powers may have been used in making the great World, there was only *one God*, who was the Master-engineer of the World, who designed, ordained, arranged, and regulated it all.

Let us begin with the Earth itself. What do we find therein? We find coal in abundance, to warm our homes and cook our food; then iron, the material of all those tools with which we till the ground, make our clothing, our furniture, indeed, everything that has to be shaped; the stone to build our houses, and lime and sand, to join the stone together; and then, not the least of the treasures of the earth, we find springs of pure water bursting out of the hard rocks, flowing in little streams, and swelling into large rivers, always ready and at hand to quench our thirst. *All for the good of the inhabitants of this Earth.*

Then let us consider the Sea. It is the great cistern, from which the sun and air draw up moisture. The moisture collects into clouds, the clouds fall in refreshing showers of rain upon the fields and forests, making the earth bring forth corn, and fruit, and flowers in abundance. And then the surplus water runs into rills, and the rills run into ditches, and the ditches into brooks, and the brooks into rivers, and the rivers into the sea; and so the water which came from the sea returns to the sea, completing its circle of usefulness, and ready to begin anew a like circle of silent, useful

work; and *all for the good of the inhabitants of this Earth.*

Next, let us consider the living things that swarm in the sea. There are shoals of fishes which yield food, sea-monsters which yield oil, and sea-weeds which manure the fields near the sea-coasts; *all for the good of the inhabitants of this Earth.*

Then let us consider the Air. How wonderfully it is arranged! We are always breathing a part of it; so, too, are the plants. Now you might think that, in the course of time, all the air would be spent, or would become impure, through so many plants and animals breathing it; and so it would, but for the wise forethought of God.

The air, which you cannot see, and which you only feel when it blows against your face, is made up of several different kinds of gas or air, mixed together. One of these gases (oxygen) animals inhale or breathe *in*, and, when it has passed through their lungs, they breathe it *out* again. It is then found to be entirely changed, and to be exactly like another part of the air (carbonic acid gas) which the plants breathe. And so, you see, the animals breathe out the very kind of air which the plants require.

But this is not all. This (carbonic acid) gas, which the plants and trees breathe, also becomes changed, in passing through them, and, when they breathe it out, it is changed back again into oxygen—the very kind of air that we and all animals require. It cannot matter how many animals there are upon the earth to be sup-

plied with air. For, however impure they make it, the plants and trees are quite sure to set it right again.

Surely such a fact as this is quite enough to show that the animals, the plants, and the air they breathe, must have had one and the same Maker. For how could we imagine it possible that the animals were made by one maker, the plants by another, and the air they breathe by a third, and yet that this wonderful arrangement could exist?

Another great fact in nature, which I shall proceed to explain, is that *there is no waste*.

If you inquire into the cause of this, you will find how it is that there is no waste. You will see that animals, plants, and even lifeless things, have a way of changing places one with the other. For example:

Suppose we sow some beans; the rain moistens them; in course of time, they will sprout. There is something in the seed which we call *life* (but which we do not at all understand), giving it the power of breathing the air, of drinking the water, and of feeding in the lifeless earth.

And so the seed grows into a plant. It becomes larger and larger. At last, it flowers; then the flowers drop off, and gradually the beans appear in their stead. A stem, a root, a number of leaves, a flower, and a quantity of beans, seem all to have come from a simple seed. But they have really come from many things besides the seed. Something has come out of the earth, and something out of the air, and these somethings, which were before lifeless, have mixed with the little

seed, and become part of the living plant. How, we do not know, and perhaps never shall.

Now, what becomes of the plant? Let us watch and find out. Suppose a horse eats the beans. The beans will become part of his flesh and blood, and muscles and bones, and so such part of the plant, as is useful for food, becomes part of an animal. As for the remainder, it is not wasted. The leaves will fade and the stalks will wither; but the leaves will crumble into dust at last, and become part of the earth again—a very fertile part, known as leaf-mould. The stalks and roots will do the same, if left to themselves; but the farmer will, perhaps, burn them, and use the ashes for manure, which brings them to the same useful end; for they become part of the earth again, ready, next year, to serve the same useful purpose; perhaps not as part of a crop of beans, but for wheat, or barley, or something of that sort.

And bear this in mind. It is the *same* earth, the *same* lifeless soil, which becomes part of the beans, or part of the wheat, or part of the barley.

We have seen how the lifeless earth changes into, and forms part of, the living plant, and how a portion of the living plant changes into, and forms parts of, the living and moving animal. Let us watch the further changes.

The horse which ate the beans, of course, breathes; and we know that part of his food goes to form the air which he breathes out. So certain portions of the beans go back into the air, which, you will remember, was part

of the nourishment of the growing bean. And more than that, it goes back just in the very state, fit and ready for the plants to breathe.

But what becomes of the horse? In course of time, it will die of old age. Its skin will be used for one purpose, and its hair for another, and, perhaps, its flesh will feed other animals; but its bones will be burned and ground for bone-earth, a most valuable manure; and such parts of the poor old horse as cannot be turned to some profitable purpose, will be buried in the earth, becoming dust, very fertile dust, ready, like the bone-earth, to grow a crop of beans, or wheat, or barley of extra-fine quality.

The chain is thus complete between the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral creations.

Does it, then, seem possible that these things had more than *one* Maker? If there were two or more makers, would it be likely that the work of one would exactly fit into the work of the other, in every respect; that the object or intention of one would exactly agree with the object or intention of another; that the material used by the one would be the same as the material used by the other?

If there were more than one Maker, would it be likely that the earth and all in it would be controlled by one never-changing law; that the great planets, which twinkle like little sparks in the sky, would follow the same law ("The law of gravitation"); that the animals would be so formed that they breathe *one* air, and the plants so formed that they breathe *another* air; and,

above all, that there would be manifest in all the works of creation *one* main object, namely, *the good of all living creatures?*

The thing is impossible. There cannot be two or more makers. If such a work as the steam-engine required one master-mind to design it, what shall we say of the world, where we find thousands of objects—each more wonderful, more lasting, more perfect, than the steam-engine—and all fitting exactly into one another, and pointing to one object—*Life?*

There can be but one conclusion—that the world must have been designed by *one* Master-Mind; that there is but *one God*, the Creator and Ruler of all things.

In olden times, there were so many people—and some very clever people, too—who believed in several gods.

They saw the works of Creation with eyes like our eyes, *but not with thoughts like our thoughts*. They viewed the sun as the source of light, which made their fields fertile and their gardens gay. They viewed the rain as a source of gloom, and as an enemy of the sun, because it often spoiled their crops, undoing all the good which the sun had wrought. They considered the wind as an enemy of the rain, because it dried it up, and undid the rain's work.

So when they saw the different powers of nature fighting with each other, the one undoing the work of the other, they thought each power had a separate god which ruled it.

And this idea they carried still further. They saw

that men were ruled by different virtues and vices. One was moved by Revenge, another by Love, another by Hatred, another by Ambition, another by Avarice, another by Patriotism, another by Philanthropy, and so on; and they found such very different results produced by these different men, that they imagined the various virtues, vices, and passions, which led them or drove them on to these different results, must each have a different god.

Besides, they often saw in one and the same man, perhaps in themselves (as we find in ourselves), good passions and bad passions, fighting with one another, sometimes the one and sometimes the other gaining the victory.

Thus it happened that they had a great number of gods;—a god of the sun, a god of the rain, a god of the winds, and a god of the waves, and so on.

No doubt, many of the clever people in those days must have thought this absurd; for some of them, in their books, made their gods cut a very funny figure, representing them as doing all sorts of ungodly things. But certainly there were millions who really believed in all these gods. And we must not laugh at them; for they knew no better.

Their idea of a number of gods arose in this way: they noticed the sun, and noticed the rain, and noticed the wind; they saw the effects of each, but did not think of the effect of all put together. They saw that one power moistened the earth, and the other dried it; that one parched the earth, and the other cooled it;

but they did not see that it was the moistening and drying, the parching and cooling, which, all put together, made the crops grow.

So, too, in the affairs of men: they saw the love and the hatred, the charity and the revenge, the avarice and the ambition, the good and the evil, pulling different ways; but they did not see that all these opposites, put together, kept the world of men in that state of activity of mind and body which is a necessity of man's nature. In a word, they did not look at the world, as we have been looking at it, as a *whole*; and did not notice—indeed, did not know—how all these parts fitted into each other, and formed the whole.

But, happily, we know better. We know that these powers of Nature, which, by themselves, would produce such opposite effects, together balance one another; and it is this *balance of power*, which affords another proof that there is but one Creator and Ruler of the world.

This idea may be explained by another example taken from the affairs of men. We read in the newspapers, now and then, about some ambitious nation trying to become too strong, or endeavoring to master its weaker neighbor. When such things take place, the rulers of the other nations step in and say that the thing ought not to be, lest it should disturb the “balance of power”; in other words, lest the ambitious nation should become too powerful, and swallow up the little nations. Thus the “balance of power” is maintained by one nation watching the other very closely, and keeping it in check.

But sometimes the ambitious nation says, "I *won't* be kept in check; I *will* swallow up my weak neighbor." And, perhaps, he will pretend that his weak neighbor is wicked and barbarous, and deserves to be swallowed up; or, perhaps, he will try to show that his weak neighbor doesn't mind being swallowed up, and, indeed, rather likes it. Then there begins a terrible dispute, and perhaps the nations come to blows, and there is a long and frightful war. Usually the "balance of power" is maintained in such a conflict; but sometimes it ends in the ambitious nation becoming more powerful, till it goes on, year after year, greedily adding fresh provinces to its empire. Such a state of things never lasts, but, while it lasts, it is very inconvenient and burdensome.

But in Nature—that is, in the works of God—it is very different. There, the balance of power is quite as necessary; for, without it, we should, now and then, have all our houses blown down by a hurricane, all our fields burned by the sun's heat, or all the inhabitants of the earth swept away by a deluge; for the winds, the sun, and the rain would be quite strong enough to produce such results, *if they were not held in check*.

Yet all the forces of Nature are so nicely balanced that, while each performs its work, it works without destroying. Now and then, indeed, there are slight, very slight departures from the balance of power, but very soon it restores itself by some convulsion, affecting but a small portion of the earth, such as an earthquake, a whirlwind, or a thunderstorm. These are often de-

structive, but they are, no doubt, for the general good, evil though they may appear to be. We see the good of a thunderstorm; perhaps we may, some day, when we shall have grown wiser, see the good of an earthquake. We are not yet wise enough to know the reason of earthquakes.

The forces of Nature cannot, therefore, have separate and independent rulers, as the kingdoms of the earth have. Those forces, pulling in opposite ways, and each performing different useful work, still balance one another, and balance one another *exactly*. Hence, there must be but One Creator, who made these forces, and governs them.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT GOD.

If you had a friend living a long way off, whom you had never seen, but who had always been kind to you, paying you attention in various ways, you would, no doubt, desire to know all about this unseen friend. You would try to do something to please him. You would, moreover, try to find some one who had seen this friend, so that you might learn all about him; but if you could not discover any person who had seen him, you would endeavor to find out his character in another way. You would think over all the presents he had sent you, and the manner in which they were sent, and the quantity in which they were supplied, and the purpose of each, and you would thereby be able to arrive at a pretty good guess of what your friend's character was like.

Now you and I have such a friend, and his name is God, and I have already shown you that we have only *one* such Friend. Neither you nor I have ever seen Him, but we receive presents from Him every day.

I dare say that you feel that you ought to know something about His power, His nature, His character, His likings, and dislikings. This is what we mean when we talk of the *attributes of God*.

Well, let us see if we can find some of the information we want.

God has given us the earth to live upon. What a magnificent present! Of how many thousands of presents does it consist! If we lived hundreds of years, we should never be able to count the treasures it contains, never grow tired of the beauties it exhibits.

What a wonderful world it is! There is everything to charm the sight. The face of Nature is so fair that we never weary of it. The fields and the forests, the heavens and their hosts, the glorious sea, all delight our senses.

Think of the flowers, so sweet to the smell, so charming to the sight, filling our houses with fragrance and cheerfulness! Think of the food so bountifully supplied, and so agreeable to the taste as to render the satisfying of hunger one of the great pleasures of life! Think of the fresh air of Heaven, how balmy it is! Think of the joys of the heart and of the soul, the emotions of love, of gratitude, of hope, and the comfort of a good conscience. It is a splendid place, this world of ours!

But now you are reminding me that there are such things as disease, want, suffering in many forms, hatred, crime—many, many shocking things that will hardly bear thinking about; that, though the mountains look so beautiful, there are such things as volcanoes, pouring out destructive fire; that though the sea is so grand a sight, there are such things as shipwrecks; that though the birds sing so sweetly, and

though their plumage is so lovely, there are such things as vultures and eagles who live only by the death of other animals.

You are quite right to mention them. We cannot shut our eyes to the truth.

But a little thought will help us to explain why there is so much evil in the world, as well as good.

Something within us tells us that there is a world beyond this; that when we die, we shall live elsewhere, in a happier and a better state. We are taught this at home and at school; and to you and me, who have learned this from other sources than our own thoughts and feelings, it may be difficult to think that this idea would come into our heads naturally, without any teaching. Nevertheless this is true, for the most savage nations have the notion of a future life implanted in their breasts, not merely as a hope, but as a conviction.

This world is a place of preparation for the future world; here we have to make ourselves fit for the enjoyment of everlasting life, and the joys of the next world will depend on our conduct in this. Even savages think that their heroes who die in battle—according to their ideas, the most noble end—will be rewarded in the world to come; and even the most uneducated human beings among those we call civilized, have some vague idea that their crimes will be punished in a world beyond this.

We, too, though we cannot say why, believe the same.

Now let us try to account for the presence of evil by a familiar illustration.

Suppose that, at school, you were not compelled to learn, but were allowed to do whatever you liked, so that if you felt inclined to talk, or to have a game, or to go out for a walk during school hours, you could do so, without your master finding fault with you; would the master who so indulged you be really kind? Silly and thoughtless children might perhaps think he was; but you know better. You know that you go to school for the purpose of learning those things which will be useful to you when you grow older. If you attend to your studies at school, you will get on in the world; you will become clever and good, and people will respect and love you.

It is, therefore, the duty of your master to see that you do attend to your studies. The good master will always do this. Sometimes he will encourage you by fair words, by smiles, and by giving you prizes; at other times, he may find it necessary to speak angrily to you, to frown at you, or to punish you. Now, the sensible master, who occasionally frowns and punishes you, is your best friend; while the foolish instructor, who always indulges your fancies and your frolics, is, in fact, your enemy.

It is, perhaps, difficult for you to see this at the time. While you are being punished, you feel angry with your teacher, and think him too harsh; but the time will come when you will see things in their true light. When you have left school, you will feel thankful to him who

checked your indolence by wholesome punishment, and will despise him who encouraged it by his indulgence.

Now, if you consider this life as a place of preparation for a happier and better life, you must regard the world as a school in which your soul is to be educated and trained, so as to fit it for a happy destiny in the next world. Thus it is that God acts toward us as a wise instructor. He calls into activity the noble impulses of our soul, and checks its evil tendencies. Sometimes He causes the light of His countenance to shine upon us, showering down blessings upon us, and prospering our undertakings; at other times He finds it necessary to frown upon us, to disappoint our hopes, to afflict us with disease or other misfortunes. But all is done for our own eventual good. You may depend upon it, that God knows how to teach us the all-important lesson, how to prepare for the future life—that He knows when to encourage, and when to chasten. You may rest assured that it would not be for our advantage if we always had things as we would wish them to be.

Even as children sometimes require to be corrected, lest they become selfish and wilful, even so do men require trials and disappointments to recall them to a sense of duty and to improve their soul; and God is far too wise and too good a teacher to withhold the needful correction. By our very nature we require occasional sorrow and suffering.

But, perhaps, you may ask—Could not God, who created us, have so formed us as to have different nat-

ures? Could He not have made us so naturally inclined to do good that we should not have needed correction? Let us look into our own experience for an illustration:

Suppose that a teacher offered prizes to those of his pupils who would answer a number of examination-questions. Suppose that, contrary to the usual custom, he were to set very simple questions, and (to make it a very easy matter to answer them) allowed his scholars to refer to as many books as they pleased, and even to copy the answers from them. I know what you would say to this. You would object to it altogether. You would say:—"I should not care for a prize so easily gained. The examination would not prove my merit at all. Any dunce could answer as well as I could in such circumstances. So I would rather be excused from being examined. If I gained the prize, I should not deserve it, and so would not value it."

But just suppose the teacher were to give such questions as he thought his pupils ought to be able to answer, if they had worked hard and used their time well; and suppose he left them entirely to their own resources, thinking that, with the knowledge he had conveyed to them, they ought to be well able to answer even the most difficult questions. What would you say then? You would say, "I shall be glad to be examined upon these terms. I know I shall have to work hard to deserve the prize; but, if I work hard, I shall gain it. Such a prize will be worth having."

Let us apply this illustration: Life is our school; God our great Schoolmaster; everlasting happiness

the prize He offers to us, His pupils. If it required no exertion on our part to obtain this prize; if life offered no difficulties and no temptations, *so that we could hardly help doing good, where would be our merit?* Our happiness would be marred by the thought that it had not been earned by our exertions. Therefore God, in His goodness, has ordained it otherwise. Like the wise schoolmaster, He has made the examination hard, and consequently the prize worth having. He has placed difficulties and temptations in our way, that we might battle with them and obtain the victory. To some He has made life a struggle for existence; but doubtless He has made them proportionately strong to enable them to carry on the struggle. Every one has his sorrows, his pains, his heart-burnings, his temptations, and his difficulties. Even the most favored are not free from them. Let us not cry over them. Let us rather remember that they are as the difficult examination-questions. They are a mark of the goodness of our Creator. *The evil is there for man to conquer.*

And God has given man the power to conquer it. The passions are strong within us; but the will to overcome them is stronger. The voice of temptation is loud; but the voice of conscience is louder. And so, too, in the world of matter: If the enemy be famine, man finds some mode of improving the barren ground. If it be tempest, he has at hand the means of warding it off and protecting himself from its ravages. If it be the loss of worldly possessions, he has within himself the energy to take heart and to try to replace them. If

it be disease, he finds remedies to fight it, and even to prolong the span of life. If it be death, he has it in his power so to live as to make death itself but a passing evil for a lasting good.

Yes, there are evils in the world; but they are the incentives to our toil. They are the giants with whom we have to contend. To conquer them by honest strength of purpose, is the aim and end of the great battle of life.

Thus, then, we see how evil tends to our eternal welfare.

Shall we fail to acknowledge that the Being who has given us such a beautiful place to live in, endowed us with such powers of enjoying its beauties, mingled good and that which seems to us evil, so wisely, so mercifully and so kindly, fashioned our body and mind so wonderfully, is a Being infinitely good, merciful, and wise?

CHAPTER IV.

MORE ABOUT GOD.

WE have seen that God is good, merciful, and wise. But we wish to know still more about Him.

1. GOD IS ETERNAL; that is, He always *did* exist and always *will* exist. How do we know this? If He did not *always* exist, there must have been some time when He was Himself created by some one else; but that would be nonsense, for when we speak of a Creator, we mean a being who was the first cause of everything. There could not have been a Creator prior to the first cause or Creator of All, and, as we cannot imagine a beginning to time, we cannot imagine a beginning to God. Hence we may declare that God has existed forever.

But how can we tell that God always *will* exist? We can only judge of the future by the past. We cannot believe it possible for Time and Creation to come to an end, and, while these exist, there must always be a Creator to rule and govern the world.

2. GOD IS IMMUTABLE; that is, He never changes. How do we know this? You might argue that since the works of the Creator show constant change, the Creator Himself must likewise be changeable. But this would be a false conclusion.

It is quite true that we see change everywhere in nature. Without it there would be no life. But that change is always produced *in precisely the same manner*, and always in the same order.

For instance: If you take a pound of ice, and pour boiling water upon it, the ice will melt; and, however often you try the experiment, you will find that it will always require exactly the same quantity of boiling water to melt the pound of ice. Again, if you mix sand and potash in certain fixed proportions and put them in a furnace, they will produce the substance we call glass; but, unless you keep to those fixed proportions, the glass will not be produced.

And as it is with small matters, so it is also with greater ones. The earth itself, and all the planets, revolve around the sun, each in a period peculiar to itself, a period which is always the same. We know exactly, by calculation, to a second, when an eclipse will take place, long before it occurs. We know exactly, to a second, when there will be new moon or full moon. Indeed, everything in nature has always been found to be so regular that people in olden times called any fixed order of things, observed everywhere, "a law of Nature." They ought to have called it a law of the Creator.

If the laws of the Creator are thus unchangeable, what must the Creator be? Surely He, too, must be free from all change—Immutable.

3. GOD IS INCORPOREAL; that is, He does not possess bodily form. If God is unchangeable, He cannot

be composed of matter, or have any bodily form. For all things formed of matter, or having bodily form, are liable to change. The hardest rocks crumble to dust in course of time. Metals rust away to powder. Everything natural, or formed of matter, is changed by time. If, then, God is unchangeable, He must also be incorporeal; He must be without bodily form.

You will perhaps ask, if God has no bodily form, what is He like? This is a question which no one can possibly answer.

Some of us picture God as some great giant with enormous power. We must not think of God in that way at all, for then we would be no better than the ancient idol-worshippers. When we think of our parents, and love them, we do not think so much of their looks or of their form, but of their goodness and kindness to us. Probably no one ever loved his mother any the less for her being ugly, or any the more for her being beautiful. And so we should think of God. We should think of His goodness and kindness to us, shown in His providing for our daily wants; of His wisdom and power, shown in the government of the world; of His mercy and forbearance, shown in His permitting sinners to live that they may repent of their wickedness; and, if we think of all these qualities, we need no other picture of God.

4. GOD IS OMNISCIENT AND OMNIPRESENT; that is, He knows and sees everything. He, who creates and regulates all things, must surely have a perfect knowledge of things *before they take place*.

How could it be otherwise? Surely the great Creator must know everything which He has formed, and His power must be present everywhere among His works, though we see Him not; for we discern His watchful care in all things. He who is the Creator of every cause, must also be aware of the effect; for both effect and cause are of His creation. So God must know everything. Our every thought and action are ever open to the gaze of the God who made us.

5. GOD IS OMNIPOTENT; that is, He is all-powerful. Let us try to understand this. It means that nothing is too great or too wonderful for the power of God to accomplish.

We see His mighty power wherever we turn,—in the giant mountains and in the vast deep, in the peaceful valleys and in the flowing streams, in the swift whirlwind and in the rolling thunder, in the rustling breeze and in the gentle dews. We see His power in the birds and beasts and fishes, in the trees and shrubs and flowers, and in *ourselves*. We see His power in the earthquake and volcano; in the splendid sun, the gentle moon, and all the hosts of heaven—countless beyond number, great beyond measure, stretching through space beyond limit.

Looking at these, His glorious works, and remembering that He rules and regulates all of them by His own Power and Will, who shall say that there can be a limit to the power of God? He moves worlds, and keeps them ever moving. Can we imagine anything requiring greater power? He gives life, and makes that

life bring forth fresh life, without end. Can we doubt the power of the Great Being who works such wonders? Surely not! And therefore we say that God's power is immeasurably great. God is Omnipotent, All-powerful.

CHAPTER V.

MAN AND HIS POSITION.

IF I ask you what you are, you will reply, "A human being"; and you will feel a sensation of pride in the knowledge that you are superior to the handsomest bird that soars through the skies, and nobler than the noblest beast that roams through the forests.

And, indeed, you are: The beasts of the field and the fowls of the air have no speech. The wild beast roars ever the same note; the birds sing ever the same tune. Their enjoyments are few, because their wants are few. They live, they eat, they drink, they sleep, they bring forth young, they die—that is the life-history of every bird, beast, reptile, and fish, since the Creation till the present day. There has been no improvement, no progress. The bird builds its nest to-day precisely as birds did five thousand years ago.

But with you, how different! You have speech—the power of conveying your thoughts, your feelings, and your wishes to those around you. Your voice is unlike any other voice in creation. What varieties of feeling it can express! With it you may laugh, or you may cry; with it you may indicate your admiration or your disgust, your love, your pity, or your scorn. The same

words, spoken in different tones, will have different meanings.

Then think of the music of the voice. The cuckoo never tires of her two notes, and knows no others; the nightingale, with a voice of wider range, yet only knows one song. But man can do much more. He can combine his notes without limit, and make sweet music to echo every thought; as many songs as thoughts—without number.

Then reflect upon your face. You may be plain or handsome, it matters not; there is that in your face which is a treasure beyond price—the power of expression. The voice utters words, but it is the face which speaks. The voice of pity is sweet; but how much more eloquent the pitying look, the moist eye, the face alight with sympathy! The voice of anger is terrible; but what are its effects without the flaming eye, the pouting lips, the distended nostrils, the flushed countenance?

And think of the form of man. *He is the only animal that stands naturally upright.* Some animals, it is true, from their habit of climbing, assume something like the erect attitude; but it is always forced and unnatural; and the creature seems to be glad to walk on all its legs again. Those long fore-legs which, as they swing gracefully by the monkey's side, seem to try to make us believe that they are arms, soon drop listlessly to the ground. The legs will be legs. The animal must walk bent to the earth. Even the gorilla, that nearest approach to man, though its strength is enormous, soon

becomes fatigued, when it walks in an erect position. The beast looks downwards, man upwards. There is something noble in the appearance of even the meanest man.

But man has qualities which are wholly absent in the brute creation.

He alone has the gift of Reason. Some have maintained that the brute shares this gift with man, but only in a less degree, and that what we call instinct is but a low kind of reason. But it matters little by what name we call it. We know full well, that the most sagacious brute never does anything which could indicate reasoning. Its senses are keen, and it readily distinguishes friend from foe; its appetites are keen, and its senses guide the creature to the means of satisfying its cravings. It has its likes and dislikes, memory, hatred of a foe, and gratitude to a benefactor; but, in spite of its experience and memory, it shows no increase of intelligence, after it has once reached maturity.

Man alone progresses. He does not accept the position in which he is born as a fate. His Free-will gives him the power of bettering his condition. No man is ever truly contented. The striving for something higher is the blessed distinction of our race. Without it, we would settle down in life like the beasts of the forest, careless of the future, indifferent to improvement. The desire of improvement spurs to healthy action, gives a relish for the duties of life, and bids us try to leave the world better than we have found it.

The desire of improvement does not end here; it

gives birth to that noblest of all desires—the hope of a future life.

And here again you feel the proud position of man. You feel that you have a Soul within you, a Spirit which can never perish, which must live, when your body will have decayed and crumbled into dust. You feel that it is this soul, that sets in motion all your thoughts, your feelings, your reasoning, your judgment, and all the powers of your mind. You feel that it is this soul that bids you improve, that makes you dissatisfied even with the greatest worldly happiness, that tells you that the fulness of happiness is in a world beyond this.

If there were need to prove that the soul is immortal, you could not have a better proof than your own hopes—the hopes of all men. Surely God, whose greatest attribute is kindness, would not have breathed into man so noble a hope, and so holy an aspiration, without giving him the means of realizing them. The soul must be immortal, because an all-merciful Creator has bid us hope for immortality.

We know that everything in creation has an object and purpose. If there be no hereafter for man, what is the object, what is the purpose of his life? Surely not the objects and purposes he attains in this world.

Take, for example, the life of a poor laboring man. He works hard all the days of his life, and all his wages are a morsel of bread. He has few enjoyments, few comforts; and the older he gets, the more difficult he finds it to earn a livelihood, the more burdensome his existence becomes.

Perhaps he is more fortunate than such men usually are. Perhaps, as he grows old, his children love, honor, and cherish him, and he has few troubles to weigh down his hoary head. But, however fortunate the lot of such a man, as he grows older, he will find in the world fewer and fewer attractions. Everything becomes irksome. He used to like the music of children's voices; he cannot bear it now. He used to like a nice gossip with his neighbors; he does not care for it now, for his tongue is sluggish and his memory fails him. He used to like to read what was going on in the world; but now he can read no more: his sight is too weak; and if anyone reads to him, he is nervous. Ask him, "What would you like, my good old man?" and he will reply, "Nothing, thank you. Let me sit quietly in my old arm-chair, next a roaring fire. Let me sit there quietly, doing nothing; only thinking."

Can this be the end for which this good old man has been laboring hard all his life?

Take another case. Take, for example, the life of a great statesman. He has worked very hard for the public good. Early and late he has labored to improve the condition of his fellow-creatures. Suppose the most favorable state of things. His services have been successful, and have been fully valued. The nation honors him; the great men of the earth court him; and people say he is one of the greatest men of the age. And he has a loving family, who almost adore him. As for riches, he has more than he can ever care to increase. What more can he have of the good things of

this world? And yet, though this great man has attained the summit of his worldly ambition, he is not happy. He is growing very old. He cannot help himself. He can scarcely walk. He goes to the Senate, the scene of his former triumphs, and people listen to a tremulous voice from lips which used to pour forth fervid eloquence; and as they listen, fondly catching every syllable, they mutter to themselves, "What a wonderful old man! but how different from what he was!" And then he knows himself how he has changed. He sees that the words of younger men have greater weight than his. So he enjoys the world no more. Day by day he becomes weaker. Even his high position weighs heavily upon him, bringing him responsibilities which he is too weak to bear. What can he do but follow the example of the poor old laborer, and sit quietly by the fireside, musing on the past?

And can this be the end for which this great and noble old man has been laboring hard all his life? Impossible. There must be a higher end in a world beyond this. There must be an existence in a future state, where the worker of good meets an eternal reward.

But you must know that the majority of the human race are not so fortunate as the two men of whom we spoke. We are not all born to a happy life, not all destined to be heroes. For many, life is almost a struggle for existence. And what of them whose happiness is chequered with many misfortunes, and whose worldly hopes are seldom half fulfilled? Surely, the aims and objects of their lives are not to be found in this world.

And worldly happiness is, at best, but a very partial kind of happiness. One man longs to attain riches, and thinks he will have arrived at the summit of happiness, if he becomes a rich man. He works hard, and becomes rich. And when he is rich, do you think he has attained happiness? Another man longs for knowledge—a more worthy longing. He studies hard; he travels; he searches for truth everywhere, and becomes a very learned man; and when he has acquired all this knowledge, what is his happiness? He has the small gratification of feeling that he knows a little more than his fellow-creatures; but he has learned, among other things, the humiliating fact, that the more knowledge he has acquired, the more extensive has the field of knowledge become to him. The more he explores, the greater the extent of unexplored territory that rises before him.

And so with the object of every earthly hope, every earthly ambition that we foster in our hearts. It looks beautiful, it seems perfect happiness at a distance. But when attained, there seems always something wanting to make the happiness complete. We always crave for something more.

What does all this show? Does it not distinctly indicate that if happiness be the wages for toil, our wages are not paid in this world? Does not the very fact that our powers of enjoying worldly pleasures diminish as we grow older, plainly indicate that the great store-house of happiness is in a future world?

Yes. Wherever we look, we see facts which point

clearly to the conclusion that this life is a preparation for another life; that happiness may certainly be found on earth, but that *perfect* happiness cannot be attained in this life; that we are constituted to improve, that we are placed here to improve; that our improvement leads to our happiness; that this world is a world of work, but that the real wages will be paid in a world beyond this.

CHAPTER VI.

REWARD AND PUNISHMENT.

IN the world to come, every man will receive the reward or the punishment to which his actions in this world entitle him.

But you will say, "We know nothing of the next world. How can we talk about such matters?" To a certain extent you are right. No one has ever come back from the great unknown—to tell us what is the reward of the pious, and what the punishment of the wicked.

And it is well that our knowledge upon this subject is uncertain. For, if we knew exactly the nature and extent of the reward or punishment in store for us, there would be no such thing as pure motive, and consequently there would be no merit in doing right and avoiding wrong.

Men would then probably find it worth their while to be good and moral, and would be so not because it was right, but because it was profitable. But would such happiness be *pure* happiness? I think not.

Suppose you go to school with your work well prepared, and that you have accomplished the task set you by dint of great industry and perseverance; and sup-

pose that your teacher is so pleased with your work, that he gives you a prize, which you never had the least idea he would bestow, you will feel delighted at receiving such a reward. Your delight will be of the purest kind; for you will feel not only pleased at receiving the prize, but you will feel proud at having received it as a *token* of your industry, and not as a *payment* for your industry. You will feel that you have acquired that knowledge for the love of knowledge, and not for the sake of any benefit that you might derive from it.

But, suppose that your teacher set his class this very same difficult task, telling you and all his pupils that whoever performed the task to his satisfaction should receive a prize, I dare say you would try to gain it. But if you did, I am sure your pleasure would be very different from what it was when you gained the other prize, without it having been promised to you. *You would work for the prize, not for the knowledge:* and when you took the prize, you would feel as if you had taken a sort of bribe to do something which was, after all, only right and proper that you should have done, without any bribe. The happiness being less pure, the knowledge acquired would be less pure.

And so it would be, if our great Master, the Creator, had announced to us the reward in store for us in a future life for every good action, and the punishment for every sin. The happiness derived from the reward would not be pure happiness. But, with the uncertainty of our knowledge as to the reward and punishment, virtue is truly its own reward on earth, and the happiness, be it

great or small, which will be our prize in heaven will be pure happiness.

That such reward and punishment must exist, is sufficiently clear. Let us see how it is that we must believe it:

In every-day life, we frequently see bad men prospering, and good men suffering the greatest misfortune. We often see men, utterly unworthy, leading a very pleasant life, growing rich and powerful, and apparently untouched by the least pang of remorse. Everything with them seems to prosper, and good fortune seems to grow even out of their wickedness. On the other hand, there are men who lead a good and virtuous life—honest, industrious, and religious men—whose labors end all in disappointment, who are stricken by poverty or disease, and who are ever bowed down under the weight of their misfortunes.

God is just; and even though these cases may be exceptional, He cannot be unjust even in these exceptional cases. Now, if there were no punishment in a future life for the wicked man who prospers in this world, and no reward in a future life for the good man who is unfortunate in this world, would such a state of things be consistent with the perfect justice of God? We know not fully the ways of God; but we know for certain that He is just; and justice requires that the wicked man who prospers here shall be punished hereafter, and that the good man who is unfortunate here should receive the reward of his good deeds in a future state.

Just as the bread is sweetest, for which we have to toil the hardest; just as the child is dearest, for whom we have to suffer most anxiety, so is the happiness greatest for which we have to work the most.

So we are here *to earn* the everlasting happiness, which will be true happiness only if we shall have fairly earned it by working for it and deserving it. We all have trials and temptations placed in our way; and he deserves eternal reward the most who overcomes them. We all have passions and vices, and he earns best his title to everlasting reward who conquers them. We all have opportunities of doing good to our fellow-creatures, of improving our own minds, of contributing, each in his own small way, to the improvement of the world. He who does this work well, deserves and earns the highest reward of immortal life.

But if, on the contrary, we encourage our vices, if we lead a selfish life, setting a bad example to those who are sure to copy us, if we abuse our opportunities, if we are dishonest to our neighbors, if we stifle the voice of conscience, if we transgress the laws of morality, if we forget all else in our love of wealth and worldly position, can we expect a reward in a future life from a just God? Must we not rather expect a punishment for spending our lives uselessly and wickedly, for neglecting golden opportunities, for abusing the wonderful powers with which we are endowed?

Every man is responsible for his deeds. According to his work, so will be his wages in the world to come.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

HOW RELIGION WAS REVEALED.

BEFORE the world was very old there were all sorts of religions. People were not satisfied with the simple and beautiful religion taught by Nature, which declared One only God to be the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

In course of time almost all men worshipped idols, images of wood or metal or stone, of their own making, or worshipped the sun, or fire, or animals, instead of the great and unseen God.

Perhaps it was because God was invisible that they at first made idols to remind them of Him. Perhaps, when they at first worshipped and bowed down to the sun, they thought they were doing honor to God, its Creator. But, in course of time, some worshipped the sun as if it were the Creator, and others bowed down to idols, the work of their own hands, as if the idols had made them. It is difficult to believe that people could have been so silly; but it is nevertheless true. Hundreds of those idols are preserved in the British Museum, some of wood, some of metal, and some of stone. Many of the people who worshipped those idols were

very clever, and were only silly in their religious belief and practices.

Now, if people simply believed in a foolish religion, and in other respects were good people, always doing right and acting justly, their silly belief would, perhaps, do no great harm to any but themselves. But unfortunately it happened that the worship of idols led to all sorts of wickedness.

The fire-worshippers, for example, used to sacrifice men and women and even children to their fire-god, burning them in fiery furnaces as offerings (read Deut. xii. 31). Captives of war, instead of being kindly treated or kept as slaves, were slain in like manner, as offerings to the idols, and, such was sometimes the frenzy of idolaters, that many of them sacrificed their own lives, or the lives of their own dearest children, to those idols they declared to be their gods.

All this went on for very many years, for hundreds of years. Religion became idolatry, and as idolatry grew, all kinds of wickedness grew, till at last the world became so wicked that it could never have continued in such a state.

But God ordained it otherwise. He could not leave men to make their own religion, for the results had been too dreadful; so God Himself had to teach the religion that was true and good and fit for mankind, not only to make known His own existence, His own ways and works, but to make known His will, His Law, His code of right and wrong. The making known of this knowledge to man is called *Revelation*.

We read in the Bible how God revealed Himself.

It was not done in a moment. It was the slow work of many, many years.

God revealed Himself to Noah, immediately after the flood, by giving the world, through him, a few laws, intended to prevent those acts of violence which, before the deluge, had filled the world (read Gen. vi. 11).

God again revealed Himself to Abraham, the son of an idolater. He bade him leave his native land, his kindred, and his father's house, and travel in distant countries; and assured him that through him all the nations of the earth should be blessed. And wherever he went, Abraham proclaimed the Name of the True God, and by his noble example of goodness, kindness, virtue, and unselfishness, showed the world that his religion must be the true one; and that his God must be the One only God.

Abraham had several sons, one of whom—Isaac—was alone worthy to succeed him in his mission. He, too, travelled about, working, like his father, to make known to the world that as God is all Goodness, so there cannot be godliness without goodness; and that the love of God is best shown by the love of our fellow-men.

Jacob, too, was considered worthy to follow his father in his task of improving the world in spite of all his faults and failings. Sacred history shows Jacob to be a grand example of confidence and belief in the goodness and power of God.

Jacob died, and so, too, Joseph, and all his other

sons. While they lived, they and their descendants were loved and respected by the Egyptians; but when they died, the great good which Joseph had worked for Egypt, was soon forgotten; a new king arose, who knew not Joseph; and all the Israelites, or descendants of Jacob, were cruelly treated.

For they were too prosperous. They increased in numbers; and as they increased, so the knowledge of the True God probably spread throughout the land, and threatened to put an end to the idolatry of Egypt. The Egyptians grew alarmed at this. They worshipped living animals, birds, beasts, and reptiles. One would scarcely believe it; for the same history which tells these facts gives full particulars of the wonderful learning of the Egyptians, and shows how they were wiser in science and in the arts than any people of that age.

For a long, long time, the Israelites were oppressed by the Egyptians, used as slaves, over-worked and tormented; but in spite of all this ill-treatment, they did not join the idolaters of Egypt: they remained steadfast to their Religion; and when they suffered, they cried to the Lord God of their fathers, the One True God, whom they had been taught to regard as the Ruler of the world.

Their cry was heard. For God sent them Moses to deliver them from the oppression of the Egyptians—the man who was to make known God's Law to His people and through them to all mankind.

We read in the Bible how Moses followed the commands of God; how he communicated his message of

deliverance to His people; how he begged Pharaoh, often and in vain, to allow the Israelites to leave Egypt; how the wicked king afflicted the Israelites more and more; how Moses threatened him with the anger of God; how Pharaoh persisted in his wickedness; how Moses worked miracles in the sight of the king, to show that God indeed had sent him; how ten terrible plagues were sent, one after the other, to punish Pharaoh and his people for their ill-treatment of the poor Israelites; and how on the night of the tenth plague, when the firstborn of every Egyptian family was struck dead, the children of Israel, who, living in the midst of these awful plagues, had remained uninjured and untouched by them, were allowed, amid the scene of death and suffering, to pass out of the cities of the Egyptians, unhurt and without hindrance.

But the miracle which, more than any other, was to show the Israelites the power of God, was the destruction of Pharaoh's host, at the Red Sea.

Saved in so wonderful a manner, when all hope of deliverance had vanished, they were compelled to believe in God. Indeed, the Bible tells us, that when "Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore . . . the people feared the Lord, and believed in the Lord and His servant Moses."

Moses led the Israelites from the banks of the Red Sea into the wilderness of Arabia; and here they were fed daily with food which fell from Heaven. A pillar of cloud led them by day, and a pillar of fire showed them the way by night. They lived a life of miracle, for all

their daily wants were supplied by an unseen Hand, and by no work of their own.

After a few weeks of this miraculous life in the desert, they came to the wilderness of Sinai; and their minds were thus well prepared to receive the great Revelation—the proclamation of the Will of God. They were ready to listen and to believe.

And when they came near the mountain of Sinai, where God was about to reveal Himself to them, He called to Moses and bade him prepare them for their mission. He was to tell them, “If ye will obey My voice, indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people, for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” And when the people heard these words, they answered together, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do.”

The declaring of the Law was a wonderful event—the greatest event that ever took place in the world's history. God revealed Himself and His holy Will through His servant Moses, not secretly to a few, not in a dream by night, but in the open day, to a whole nation of six hundred thousand men.

CHAPTER II.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

WHEN children are young, their wise parents do not teach them too many things at first, lest they might forget them; but they tell them first the few things which are the most important; and as they get older, they go on teaching them more and more, little by little.

And God treated the children of Israel in the same wise way. He did not tell them all the Law at once, but began with the Ten Commandments, because, although the most important, they were quite easy and simple, and could be understood and obeyed by every one.

I. I am the Lord thy God, who has brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

II. Thou shalt make no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow thyself down to them, nor serve them, for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me; and showing kindness unto the thousandth generation of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

IV. Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath in honor of the Lord thy God; on it thou shalt not do any work, neither thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gate. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath and hallowed it.

V. Honor thy father and thy mother in order that thy days may be prolonged upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

VI. Thou shalt not kill.

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

The First Commandment.

God began the Commandments by telling the Israelites that He was the same God who saved them from the Egyptians. God might have told the children of Israel that He was the God who had created all the world. But they could not have understood that half so well as the fact which they had so lately experienced—that He was the God who had saved them from slavery, and that He alone was worthy to be the Lord their God.

The Second Commandment.

In the Second Commandment God tells the Israelites that they shall have no other God but Him; that they shall make no idols, nor bow down to images. And then God tells them something about Himself.

He tells them that He is a just God who punishes the wicked and that He is also a merciful God, who is good and kind to all who love Him and obey His laws.

The Third Commandment.

The Third Commandment forbids us to swear falsely; forbids us to swear at all, unless it be necessary to do so in the interest of truth.

In courts of law, people who give evidence, have to promise to speak the truth, and they call God to witness that every word they are about to speak is true. This is called swearing, or taking an oath. If, after taking the oath, they say anything untrue, they are guilty of perjury, or false swearing.

People must never swear except when ordered to do so by law. If they swear without it being necessary, they take the name of God in vain.

But taking the name of God in vain has yet another meaning. If we pray to God without thinking about what we are saying; or if we pray in a hurried, careless manner, only anxious to get through our prayers, or if we laugh or gossip in the synagogue, we take God's name in vain.

The Fourth Commandment.

The Fourth Commandment is a very long one.

You, who have lessons all the week, will no doubt think this a very pleasant commandment, and one very easy to obey; and perhaps you will think that God

need only have ordered the Israelites to rest on the seventh day without going into so many particulars. Yet there are plenty of people who break this law, and keep no Sabbath, but go on, week after week, working, and working, and working, without having any day of rest. They either forget or will not remember that they are disobeying God.

Now God tells us very plainly that we must do all our work on six days of the week; but that the seventh is the Sabbath or day of rest, and that neither we nor our servants, nor even our cattle, should do any sort of work that day; and He tells us that, after having made all things in six days, He Himself rested on the seventh day, and thus hallowed the Sabbath by His own example.

The world is so full of life and work that we are apt to forget how great a blessing is rest. What would you be, I wonder, without rest? How do you think you would get on, if, when tired out, you were to lie down and be unable to sleep, or if, when dreadfully fatigued, some cruel person were to come and tell you you must go on playing or running or jumping, whether you liked it or not? Do you think you would enjoy it, when tired out and ready for a nice refreshing sleep? I think not.

And is it not wonderful how, without trying at all, you can go to sleep? and how you wake up, feeling fresh and vigorous and ready for fun, just as if you had never been fatigued? or how, after a long, tiring walk, you sit down and rest, and then feel quite strong again and ready for another long walk? Do you wonder that

God should have blessed the Day of Rest and made it holy?

But if you, who only have to learn lessons or do needlework, and no other very hard work with your head or your hands, find rest so pleasant, how must it be with grown-up people, who have to work hard for their living all the week? How delighted they ought to be when Friday evening comes, and they feel that they need not, cannot, and dare not do any more work for a whole day! Not only would they enjoy the rest for which they have worked so hard, but when the time comes for them to set to work again, they would enjoy their work all the more, just as you feel more inclined for a nice romp, after you wake up from a sound sleep. You may feel quite sure that those who do not keep the Sabbath do not half enjoy their lives.

Now, most religions besides ours, have a Sabbath; although, as you know, some keep it on a different day; but they don't keep the Sabbath as we do: and I dare say you will ask how *we* ought to keep it.

You might be inclined to say that, as it is a day of rest, people should lie in bed all Sabbath, and so have a nice long day of idleness. But, if you look at the Fourth Commandment, you will find that the seventh day is called the "Sabbath of the Lord thy God." Now, this shows that we ought to spend at least some part of the Sabbath in the service of God, in reflecting about Him and His wonderful works, and in praising and thanking Him for His goodness.

But you must not imagine that the Sabbath is to be,

as some of our neighbors make it, a sad day, on which you may not laugh, or be merry, or read pleasant books. Our religion is a happy religion and a natural one, and you are meant to be happy and natural on the Sabbath day. When you have done your religious duties, you may play as much as you like. There are some things which you may not do, even though they be for enjoyment; but there are plenty of pleasures left to you for the Sabbath, and it must be not only a day of rest and quiet thought, but a day of joy and gladness.

The Fifth Commandment.

To honor one's parents means much more than merely paying them respect. It means that we must do whatever they tell us willingly, and even without asking why. It means that we must follow their good advice. It means that we must care for them lovingly when they grow old or ill or infirm, as lovingly as they cared for us when we were young and helpless. It means that we must bear in mind their wishes when we are away from them, and even long after they are dead. It means that we must never do anything to dishonor their good name.

And if we obey this command, God promises us that our days shall be long in the land that He giveth us.

The Sixth Commandment.

"Thou shalt not commit murder," is one of the most important laws in the Bible. It was not a new law when

God gave it on Sinai. He gave the same law to Noah when he and his family came out of the ark.

Obedience to this law makes the great difference between savages and civilized men. Among barbarians, life is never safe. One man hates another or envies his property, and he thinks nothing of killing him, if he be the stronger man. We, who are civilized, are to do all in our power to protect and save life. We may not stand by quietly and see a fellow-being perish, if we can assist him. When you read this commandment, you must not think that it does not apply to you, to whom the horrid thought of murdering a fellow-creature would never occur; but remember that it bids you assist your poor and suffering fellow-creatures, and do all that is in your power to help them *to live*.

The Seventh Commandment.

This commandment bids husbands and wives to be faithful, true, and kind to one another.

The Eighth Commandment.

There are unfortunately a great number of people who steal rather than work for a living. If they are found out, they are sent to prison, or otherwise punished; and there are people who have actually spent the greater part of their lives in prison, having been so often found guilty of theft. Perhaps they have been the children of bad, dishonest parents, and have seen all sorts of wickedness in their young days. Not that

this excuses them; but it accounts for their wickedness, which would otherwise be hard to understand.

The *protection of human life* was one of the greatest marks of distinction between savages and civilized men. The *protection of property* is another such mark of distinction. If property were not safe, no one would care to work hard to make money or amass wealth; and people would only care to work enough for their use from day to day, lest some one stronger than they should come and rob them of all they had saved. Saving, or "thrift," as it is called, is of great importance to the welfare of the world; for without thrift in good times we might starve when the bad times come. And, indeed, this really happens in barbarous countries, even in our own days. Property not being safe against thieves, the people do not care to save, but eat and use all that they produce. When a bad harvest comes, they have saved nothing, and they starve to death. So you see the importance of thrift; and as thrift cannot exist unless property is safe, you see also the importance of the law, "Thou shalt not steal."

Other parts of the Bible contain laws on the same subject, and give us particulars of the punishment of theft. In Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, we are commanded to be just in business matters, and to give full weight and true measure. A thief, if the article stolen were found with him, had to pay twice the value of what he had taken; and if he stole a living animal, and slew it, he had to "restore five oxen for the ox, and four sheep for the sheep." If he had not the means of pay-

ing, he was sold as a slave, and this was the origin of what we now call "penal servitude," which means imprisonment for a certain term of years, with hard labor.

The Ninth Commandment.

When the Jews lived in their own country, in Palestine, and a witness gave evidence affecting the life of a prisoner, the Judges reminded the witness of the duty of speaking the exact truth, and told him that he who destroyed one single human life was as guilty as if he had destroyed a whole world.

It is almost impossible to imagine any one guilty of so terrible a sin as bearing false witness against another; and yet there have been many cases, in which people have even been condemned to death upon evidence falsely given.

God has ordained in His Law that the perjurer is to suffer the same punishment as the intended victim would have suffered, if the perjurer's evidence had held good: "If the witness be a false witness, and has testified falsely against his brother, then you shall do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother."

Unfortunately, bearing false witness against a neighbor is rather a common, every-day sin.

When you hear children speaking against one another, making much of their playmates' little faults, or taking away their characters, although they are not perjurers, yet they bear false witness against their neighbors. Nothing is more valuable to anyone than *character*. And yet nothing is so easily injured by a

chance word, perhaps carelessly or thoughtlessly spoken. Gossips, who are too idle to work, are never too idle to talk, and they dearly love a little scandal about their neighbors. They mean it to be harmless enough, and have, perhaps, no notion of hurting anyone; but the harmless scandal, every time it is repeated, becomes greater and greater, exaggerated each time it is spoken, till, at last, it is by no means harmless; for it destroys a good character.

The Tenth Commandment.

Covetousness is the root of almost every sin.

We are ordered not to covet anything that is our neighbor's; and many people have thought this rather an unreasonable law, because they have not understood it properly.

The sin of coveting consists not in your wishing for a *similar* article, but for the *same* article that your neighbor has. His house, for example, could not be yours unless you, somehow, deprived him of it, and in order to do this, you might be induced to do him some wrong.

King Ahab, the Bible tells us, coveted the vineyard of Naboth; and because Naboth would not sell it to him, the King's wife, Jezebel, procured some wicked men to give false evidence that Naboth had committed a fearful crime against God, and the poor man was stoned to death; and then Ahab took possession of the vineyard he had so longed for.

Ahab and Jezebel were both very wicked people: so you are, perhaps, not much surprised at their being

covetous. But even the great and good King David, in a moment of blind passion, committed a terrible sin, through coveting his neighbor's wife, and he was fearfully punished in consequence.

So you see to what covetousness may lead us. There is no harm in being ambitious—that is, in wanting to grow greater, or richer, or more comfortable, and to have nice things about us. The harm is in letting the ambition become a passion, and letting the passions so get the better of us, that we don't mind what we do so long as we get what we want.

War and murder and theft and misery, and, indeed, almost every evil in the world would vanish, if people would only obey the Tenth Commandment.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAW OF MOSES.

THE Law which God gave to our forefathers is called the "Law of Moses," or the "Mosaic Code," because after God had proclaimed the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, He gave other laws by the mouth of Moses, who taught them to the people, through the chiefs of the tribes and the wise men, during the forty years' wanderings in the wilderness.

These laws were not given to Moses all at once; they were given at different times, as occasion required. When the forty years' wanderings were over, and Moses was about to die, he repeated the most important of them, and added some, which had not been mentioned before.

Surely, no better way could have been found of teaching a people so many laws, than by giving them a few at a time, and putting them in practice as they were given.

Remember that in those times—thousands of years before printing was invented—the laws had to be so taught as to be well kept in memory, and there is no better way of remembering things than by practising them.

The first five books of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus,

Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, are together called the *Torah*, or Law. These books are not all law-books; they are history and law combined. The word *Torah* means much more than "law"; it means instruction, or what we now call education.

The laws of the Pentateuch are not arranged, like Acts of Parliament, in a Statute Book, one after the other, in regular order; still, there is a certain amount of system in their arrangement, and though history and law appear mixed up together, there is good reason for it. Some connection will always be found between the history and the laws which are next to it.

The Israelites to whom the Law was given were meant to be distinguished from all the rest of the world; they were designed to be "a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." They were to be a pattern of goodness and virtue for all the nations of the earth, and it was with that intention that God gave the Law.

When you come to the end of Deuteronomy, you will probably say, "Surely it was not intended that all the world should obey all these laws!" and you would be right. *But it was intended that the Israelites should obey them*; for God had told them that He had set them apart to be a peculiar people, to be His own chosen nation, so that all the world should look up to them as examples. For this reason He told them that they should be holy, since He the Lord their God was Holy. For this reason He told them to set aside the evil customs they had learned in Egypt, and to follow only the customs which He taught them; not to adopt the laws

of the nations among whom they were about to dwell, but to follow only the Law which He revealed to Moses, different from any law which up to that time had existed.

When you read ancient history, you will understand how different this Law was. You will find that the laws and the customs, which existed among the ancient pagan nations, were terribly cruel, and, in many respects, terribly wicked. Those laws were the laws of "might against right." The slave, for example, had no rights—not even the right to live, if his master wished him to die. The creditor had full power over the life of his unfortunate debtor. The helpless had no protection for their lives; old people, who were unable to work, were put to death; and little babies, who were delicate at birth, were exposed to cold and hunger, and neglected till they died. You will be shocked indeed, when you learn how cruel were the nations of ancient times, and what wickedness was sanctioned by their laws.

So you see how necessary it was that, besides a model religion, there should be a model code—a complete set of laws—which should be followed by a model nation, and form a pattern for all other nations to copy, so far as it might apply to their special position and wants. True, the whole world was not meant to be a "kingdom of priests" like the Israelites; so it was not expected that the whole world should follow all those special customs and observances, which were intended to make the Israelites, outwardly and inwardly, different

from all other nations; but the whole world could look up to the "kingdom of priests," and copy their charity, their brotherly love, their justice, their morality, and their steadfast faith; and this was what God meant when He four times declared to Abraham, "Through thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

God's promise to Abraham has been fulfilled. The Jews, notwithstanding all their failings, yet deserve the name of the "kingdom of priests." For, dispersed among the nations, the Jews alone have remained the guardians of God's Holy Law, not simply guarding and preserving the Bible as a volume of venerable antiquity, but regarding it as the Word of the living God, and observing the self-same Law of Moses that our forefathers observed three thousand years ago.

CHAPTER IV.

SACRIFICE AND PRAYER.

WHEN the world was young, men did very much the same as little children do, who bring sweetmeats to their parents, thinking that what they themselves like best must be acceptable to their parents. Cain and Abel brought to God offerings—Cain from the fruit which he had tended, Abel from the firstlings of his flocks. Soon afterward, in the time of Seth, we find that “men began to call on the name of the Lord.” This means that men gave expression to their gratitude in the language of prayer and praise. And thus both sacrifice and prayer existed very early in the history of the world.

These were the first “religious observances.”

But we have seen how, in course of time, the people became idolaters, and how they, at last, came to sacrifice men and women, and even their own little children, in the strange belief that if they sacrificed that which was dearest to themselves, it would be pleasing to their gods.

So one of the first things that God had to teach the children of Israel was to give up the terrible practices of idolatry. To stop sacrifices altogether, and all at once, would not have been advisable—perhaps hardly

possible; for the desire to give something to God could not be checked. That desire had to be made harmless and even useful; and to this end was instituted the system of sacrifices that we find in the Mosaic code. In the first laws which God gave the Israelites after the Ten Commandments, He forbade their making gods of silver and gold, but explained to them how they might bring sacrifices. "Ye shall not make unto Me gods of silver, neither shall you make unto you gods of gold. An altar of earth shalt thou make unto Me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen."

The Israelites were not to sacrifice human beings. They might bring as offerings beasts or birds; but these were to be clean animals, without blemish. Even then the offerings had to be made in certain fixed and particular ways. Those who brought the sacrifice were not permitted to offer it themselves. It had to be offered by a priest, one of the descendants of Aaron, who were all considered holy servants of God.

Any animal required for food by the Israelites during their abode in the wilderness, had to be taken to the priest, slaughtered by him, and the blood and fat offered as a sacrifice. All this was to show how sacred a thing is life. It was to show that even the life of a brute was not to be taken lightly, or wantonly; and thus the people would be led to think that if the life of a beast be thus regarded, how sacred must be the life of a human being!

A large portion of the Book of Leviticus is filled with

particulars of the various sacrifices, and the manner in which they were to be offered.

We read about burnt-offerings, meat-offerings, peace-offerings, sin-offerings, trespass-offerings, and offerings of consecration. There were daily offerings, offerings on the Sabbath, the Festivals, and the Day of Atonement.

The object of all this was to compel a fixed form of sacrifice, so that the Israelites might never imitate the wicked idolatries and human sacrifices which they had been accustomed to see in Egypt. These forms of sacrifice, described in the Bible, were sufficient to satisfy all religious feelings and cravings and wants.

The work of constructing the Tabernacle for the service of God is very minutely described in the Bible. God gives every particular and detail of how it is to be made, and how furnished; and so it is prepared and fitted under the very eyes of the people, without mystery or concealment; unlike the religious systems of other nations, in which the priests made a mystery of everything, lest the people should see the deceptions they practised.

Everything in the Tabernacle was so made that the worship therein was to be open and public to the whole assembly of Israelites. The priest was to be seen when he went into the sanctuary, and when he came out. The priest was one of themselves, one of the kingdom of priests. He was to minister to God, not as a mediator between God and His people, but solely as a servant of God, performing the service of God, according to fixed rules and ordinances.

It will probably appear very strange to you that God should accept the blood of an animal as an atonement for men's sins; and it certainly would be very curious, if it were true; but it is not true. Nothing could be more ridiculous than the idea that a man, who had committed some terrible sin, should receive the forgiveness of God by simply bringing to a priest an animal to be slaughtered; and there is nothing in the Bible to warrant so absurd an idea.

Read carefully the 5th and 6th chapters of Leviticus, if you wish to understand the spirit and meaning of sacrifices. You will find that if a man committed a sin against God, he had first to make a confession of his sin, and afterward to bring, as an offering, a lamb or a kid; and if he could not afford a lamb or a kid, two turtle-doves or two young pigeons; and in case he could not afford these little birds, a tenth part of a measure of fine flour could be offered, and the priest burned on the altar a handful of the flour. In the last case—the sacrifice of the flour—there was no life taken, so there was evidently no sacrifice of blood. And thus you see *the taking of life and the sacrifice of blood were not essential to the atonement*. The really important part of the proceeding was the confession of the sin and the open declaration of the sinner's penitence.

Reading a little further, you will find that if a man sinned against his neighbor by dealing falsely with him, or by robbing him, or by deceiving him, or by detaining lost property that he had found, or by swearing to a neighbor's injury—then he had to bring as a sin-offer-

ing a ram without blemish. But, before bringing it, he had to make good to the neighbor he had injured all that he had wronged him of, and to give him, in addition, one-fifth part of the value. In this case it is clear that the really important part of the transaction was *not* the offering, but *the making good the injury*.

If we wish further to see how small a value God placed upon sacrifices, compared with the spirit in which the sacrifice was brought, we have only to refer to the prophets and sacred writings.

Samuel tells Saul, who, contrary to God's orders, had saved alive the sheep and oxen of the Amalekites to sacrifice to the Lord at Gilgal, "Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, to hearken than the fat of rams."

Isaiah exclaims, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. . . . Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

God proclaims, through His prophet Jeremiah, that the aim of the Law was obedience and not sacrifice.

The prophet Micah asks, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of

oil? . . . What does the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly before God?"

We read in the 50th Psalm, "I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Shall I eat the flesh of bulls? or drink the blood of goats? *Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High.*"

King Solomon, too, in the 21st chapter of Proverbs, declares, "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice."

Thus we find that the performance of other duties, such as obedience to God, was considered of greater importance than the bringing of sacrifice.

We learn from the Prophets that, though we have at present no sacrifices and no priests, there are other means to make ourselves acceptable to God. By penitence, prayer, and praise; by acting justly, mercifully, and charitably.

The act of prayer and praise was one of the first observances in the history of mankind. It is, therefore, proper to say a word concerning prayer in this place.

"What is the good of prayer?" Can we expect that the praises we offer to God are pleasant for Him to hear? Can we hope that He, who made all the world, listens to our puny voices and feeble words? It seems

at first hardly possible; but we know that it is not only possible but certain; for God Himself commands us to pray to Him and to praise Him. He tells us: "When thou hast eaten and art satisfied, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which He hath given thee" (Deut. xii. 10). And so in our prayer and our praise we are to look to God as the source of all blessing, to acknowledge Him as the Great Power who supports, rules, and sustains us. This acknowledgment is the great principle of every religion.

When, therefore, the great men of Israel ordained that we should worship God three times a day, and that we should offer thanks to Him before and after every meal, and utter a blessing on every suitable occasion, their object was a wise one. They intended that, in every act of our lives, we should acknowledge the greatness, goodness, and providence of God, so that the thought that He is always and everywhere at hand should keep us from sinning, and cause us to lead a good and a virtuous life.

But even if the Law of God had been silent on the subject of prayer, the dictates of our hearts would prompt us to utter words of praise; for gratitude is the natural impulse of man. If you have a favorite dog, whom you feed and carefully tend, he will lick your hand and dance around you in delight, and show you his gratitude in many ways. If you have a little bird, to whom you daily give his dole of grain and drink, he will warble out his note of thanks every time he sees you. How, then, can man, who alone has the gift of

words, forbear to bring the homage of his heart and the offering of his lips to the Creator, who made him and sustains him? That we should pray to God is a law of God, but also a law of Nature, which every man, woman, and child gladly obeys. Perhaps God is pleased with our songs of praise, just as you are pleased to hear the warblings of the little bird, for which you care.

Through prayer our hearts become elevated, our moral tone improved, and our impulses strengthened for the performance of good and noble deeds.

King David, who taught all the world the language of prayer and praise, tells us, "It is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely." And, lest we should think that the Great Creator of the universe would not hearken to our prayers, he tells us, "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him; He also will hear their cry, and will save them."

There are many who say that we cannot hope to alter the pre-ordained design and intention of God by our feeble prayers. But the same objection might be raised against all human exertion.

Shall we then cease to be industrious or ambitious, simply because we cannot see the effect of our efforts at once?

Prayer may be one of the means ordained by God to produce the legitimate ends we long for. God delights in granting such of our prayers as are worthy prayers, as a kind father delights in granting the reasonable

wishes of his children. Certainly this is the case with all prayers which we sincerely offer for our own moral improvement.

It may seem rather strange that the Law of Moses, which tells us so many things, does not tell us what prayers we should say. It gives us full particulars of the sacrifices, but ordains very few forms of prayer. In the twenty-first chapter of Deuteronomy, may be read a special prayer, to be said if a man be found slain, and his murderer cannot be discovered; and, in the twenty-sixth chapter of the same book, there are prayers which were to be said on bringing the first-fruits, and on offering the tithes; but these are rather confessions than prayers. Besides these, there are really no forms of prayer specially ordained in the Law of Moses.

Why was this? *Because prayers were to be the natural outpouring of the heart.* In later times, forms of prayer were composed for common use, and certain Psalms were sung in the Temple by the Levites. Later still, when the Jews returned from the captivity, Ezra, aided by the prophets and scribes of his time, prescribed the Order of Service, consisting principally of the prayers and psalms then in common use; and these are to be found in our prayer-book, together with very many others of much later date, all in Hebrew, except a few which, having been composed in Babylon, during the dispersion, were written in the Aramaic or Chaldee dialect, then the mother-tongue of the exiled Jews.

One may readily understand why our prayer-book should be in Hebrew. It is not only our own language,

but the language in which God spake to our forefathers; and it is the language which is still used by millions of our brethren, in many countries. And, though these prayers are only *forms* of prayer, there is much in the reflection that they are the same that have been used by our people in their synagogues, and their homes, during many generations, and that they have served during so many ages to bring pious and holy thoughts into the minds and hearts of millions of our forefathers, and to comfort them in their sorrows.

But all these prayers are of no avail, unless, in praying, we add to these set forms, composed by other people, prayers of your own, which need not be in Hebrew, and need not even be in words—I mean, loving thoughts of God, grateful thoughts for all His kindness toward you; hopes that He will guide us and give us strength to do our duty and resist temptation; and help us to improve day by day, and so enable us, small and humble though we be, to work His will on earth, and earn a place in the life to come.

CHAPTER V.

SABBATHS AND FESTIVALS.

RELIGION consists of two parts—belief and observance; belief being the act of the mind, observance the act of the body with the help of the mind. The first religious observances—sacrifice and prayer—arose from men's anxiety to *do* something to show their gratitude to God.

It was found necessary to fix particular periods and seasons when men should rest from their daily labors, so as to enable them to turn their thoughts to God and to His service; and it was for this reason that the Sabbath and Festivals were instituted.

In fixing those particular days for His service, God wisely set *bounds* and *limits* to the religious fervor of men. We are not to spend our *entire* time in penance and in prayer; we are meant to work, and religion helps to sanctify our work. The Commandment declares: "Six days shalt thou *labor*." Work was to be a duty, and a holy life was to be no excuse for a lazy life.

The Sabbath.

The Law of the Sabbath is many times repeated in the Books of Moses. Though the wording of the Commandment differs slightly in some places, the principle

is the same in all—rest on the Sabbath-day for every-one, for yourselves, your household, your servants, and your cattle.

The Bible tells us that the Sabbath is a *sign* between God and ourselves throughout all generations, and this continues to be true even to this day. The observance of the Sabbath is truly a “sign”—it is truly a test whether a man is one of God’s chosen people. The man who, though he may incur great loss or inconvenience thereby, always keeps holy the Sabbath-day, shows himself to be a really sincere Jew. It is a “sign” between the Jew and his God. It is a sign that God looks upon Israel as His chosen people, and that the Israelite looks upon God as the Guardian of himself and of his race, the Source of all earthly blessings, the Sustainer of every living creature.

And so the Jew brings a sacrifice of one-seventh portion of his time to the observance of the Holy Sabbath, in the sure hope and confidence that the time so given to God will not be lost; in the perfect trust that He who ordained the Sabbath will not bring to poverty or want those who keep His Sabbath holy.

The Feast of Passover.

All nations have certain days in the year which they celebrate as anniversaries. Just as we observe our birthday every year, so nations celebrate, each year, the events which they call to mind with pride or pleasure.

The early history of Israel was full of events worthy

to be remembered. The departure from Egypt, the giving of the Law, the travels in the wilderness—these were events worth remembering, and they were to be celebrated, not by cruel sports, not by races, not by riotous feasts, as is customary among many modern people, but by joyful thanksgiving, and by charitable deeds.

Now, why do we keep the Passover festival? Simply to recall the great deliverance of our fathers from the bondage of Egypt? Let us see:

We, who live in this happy land, free to worship God according to our conscience, free to do as we please, to go where we please, to work as we please, can hardly imagine what it was to live, as did our forefathers in Egypt, under the rule of the wicked Pharaohs. To be slaves; to be obliged to work not for ourselves, but for others; to have nothing of our own; to be beaten by cruel taskmasters, who give impossible tasks; to work in fear and dread, without hope and without the comforts and joys of home—this was the experience of the poor Israelites. And, worse than all, the lives of their children were not safe; for the cruel King, at one time, doomed them to destruction. Such was the state of bondage from which God delivered them.

But why should we, year after year, and after so many centuries, call to mind, by the observance of Passover, these terrible trials of our forefathers? To show our gratitude to God, is doubtless one reason. But there is yet another reason—to declare to the world the right of man to be free. Passover is the Festival of Freedom. We read the history of our ancestors in

Egypt, and relate their wonderful deliverance and the fall of the tyrant who had oppressed them; and we thereby declare that God ordained Man to be free—free in body, and free in mind, and we offer a warning to slave-owners, to tyrants, and to oppressors, that God will break their power.

For people are not everywhere free and happy as we are. Slavery still exists in many parts of the world. There are many countries where Jews are still oppressed, their lives and their property in constant danger; where our people cannot meet for public worship, nor even permit it to be known that they are Jews.

By Grace of God, Israel has lived through all persecution, and is, to-day, as strong as ever. Power after power has perished, nation after nation has disappeared; but Israel alone has remained alive through all these thousands of years; and, year after year, celebrates with joy and gladness and gratitude the great Festival of Freedom.

We know how the festival is celebrated; how, before the festival begins, the home is cleansed from leaven, so that no particle of it remains; *Seder* night is observed, every household joining in solemn prayer and praise, reading the narrative of the Exodus, seated around the table containing the Paschal Lamb, the unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs; how at that table all sit as equals, parents and children, master and servant, host and guest; how, for more than a week, unleavened bread is eaten, and no leaven is allowed in our homes; how we meet in the Synagogue to praise God

for His mercies; and how, on the seventh day of the Festival, we read the story of the wonderful passage of the Red Sea, and sing the Song of Moses in the same words used by our forefathers.

When you eat the unleavened bread, which is called "the bread of affliction," think of the first unleavened bread which our forefathers made in their hurried departure from Egypt; when you eat the bitter herbs, think of the bitter hardships our ancestors suffered in the "land of bondage." How thankful you must feel that you are free and happy; that you are Jews and Jewesses, openly declaring before the world the greatness, goodness, and glory of God, for you are the *living* witnesses of His greatness, goodness, and glory! Every Passover, for thousands of years, those same words of prayer and praise have been sung, which you sing; those same customs have been observed which you observe; thus making you feel as if you yourselves had just come out of Egypt, the objects of God's bounty and mercy.

The Feast of Weeks.

On the second day of Passover, when the sickle was first put to the corn, and the wheat harvest began, the Israelites were to bring as an offering "a sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest." For seven weeks afterward the days were to be counted, and on the fiftieth day, when the seven weeks were over, the Feast of Weeks was to be kept. The "first of the first-fruits" was to be brought to the House of the Lord; and so this festival

is not only called "the Feast of Weeks," but also *Shabuoth*, or "the Day of First-fruits."

In Palestine the summer is much earlier than here. The barley was ripe at the Passover season, and the corn was gathered in when the Feast of Weeks had arrived. On this festival the first-fruit offering was brought into the Temple.

A remarkable prayer was recited, when the first-fruits were brought to the Temple by each Israelite. It concludes with the words, "And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land which Thou, O Lord, hast given me." It is to be found in Deuteronomy, ch. xxvi, verses 2-10.

These last words emphasize that great principle of our religion—the recognition of God in every act of our life, in every good thing that we receive, in every happiness that we enjoy.

The prosperous farmer, fresh from his harvest-field, might feel puffed up with a sense of his importance, might grow too proud of his possessions, and might think that it is to his own industry and talent that all his wealth is due. But the Day of the First-fruits draws near. He obeys the Divine command and brings his offering to the Holy place. He joins the procession which came from every city and village of Palestine, bringing to the Temple of Jerusalem the choicest first-fruits, decked with the finest flowers, amid the sound of music and the voice of song, echoing the words, "O come, let us go up to Zion, to the Lord our God." No matter how rich he may be, he himself must carry on

his shoulder his own first-fruit, and, standing before the priest, he recites the ordained prayer, and finishes with the words, "And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land which Thou, O Lord, hast given me!" The boast half rising to the lips of the successful farmer, would be suppressed at the humble confession of his lowly origin, and at the prayer which acknowledges *God* as the Source of all good.

To us, who live in a climate where the wheat-harvest is gathered several months later than in Palestine, the Feast of Weeks, held in May or June, can present only a shadow of its former beauty; and instead of bringing, like our ancestors, our first-fruits, we are forced to content ourselves with adorning our synagogues with choice flowers as a memorial of Nature's bounty and God's loving kindness.

But, from another point of view, the Feast of Weeks is as much to us as ever it was to our forefathers. It is the anniversary of the giving of the Law on Sinai, the anniversary of the greatest event that the world has ever witnessed—the Revelation of God to His people, Israel.

The Feast of Booths.

We are commanded to dwell in booths for seven days, commencing on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, to remind us that God caused the children of Israel to dwell in booths when He led them out of the land of Egypt. These seven days are the Feast of Booths, and the eighth day was ordained to be kept as a "solemn assembly."

We are commanded, too, to take on the first day of the festival "the fruit of a goodly tree (the citron), the branches of palm-trees, the boughs of thick-leaved trees (the myrtle), and willows of the brook, and to rejoice before the Lord seven days."

It is interesting to read in the Book of Nehemiah how, after a long interval of neglect, this Festival was observed by our ancestors under Ezra, the scribe; how they published and proclaimed in all their cities and in Jerusalem saying: "Go forth unto the mount and fetch olive-branches, and pine-branches, and myrtle-branches and palm-branches, and branches of thick trees to make booths, as it is written," and how the people went forth and brought them, and made themselves booths everyone upon the roof of his house, and in the courts, and in the Court of the House of God.

In this climate it happens, unfortunately, that the season when the Festival falls is usually a rainy time of the year; and thus the command to dwell in booths or temporary huts is not so generally observed by our people as it should be. But there are yet many zealous Jews in this country who, in spite of the great inconvenience, yet make an effort to observe the command as ordained; and who erect tabernacles wherein they eat their meals and spend a portion of their time during the Festival. Those who can afford it, decorate their Tabernacles with lamps and pictures and flowers and fruits, making the little home truly a thing of beauty. The Law of Moses does not tell us how to make a *Succah* or booth; but, according to tradition, the main feature of

the *Succah* is the roof, which must be formed of green leaves, arranged in such a manner that the sky may be seen between the leaves, so as to indicate the temporary character of the structure, as distinguished from the permanent ceiling of an ordinary dwelling.

It is not only to remind us of the wanderings of our ancestors in the wilderness, but also to bring to our minds thoughts of gratitude toward God, who favors us with His bounty. At the feast of ingathering, when we might perhaps be filled with pride at our worldly success, we are told to leave our warm, substantial homes, and to take up our abode in the frail booth, roofed like the hut of a wanderer.

Looking at this leafy roof, we see the sky, and call to mind the Heavenly Hand that made and fashioned us, and gave us all we have: we see the starry hosts of heaven, and understand our own nothingness; and the frail covering, which scarcely keeps out rain and wind, makes us think of those poor distressed creatures who would have no roof to shelter them, but for our timely aid.

The beautiful trophies of nature, too, which we are commanded to take during the Festival, are meant to lead us to like thoughts of duty, and gratitude. The palm, emblem of uprightness; the citron and myrtle, emblems of that charity that spreads its fragrance far and wide, giving much and yet losing nothing; and the willow, emblem of true humility—these choice gifts of nature we are to gather, and, looking at them, learn from them a holy lesson.

And in all our rejoicings we are to be mindful of others besides ourselves. Not only "shalt thou rejoice," says the Bible; but "thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates," are to share the bounties of nature, and to take part in the joys of the happy harvest-home.

It is the custom of the synagogue to signalize the close of these holydays by a celebration, thoroughly characteristic of our religion, known as *Simchath Torah*, "the rejoicing in the Law." On this occasion the synagogue is made to wear its most festive aspect; the sacred scrolls of the Law, decked in gorgeous vestments, are carried in procession round the holy edifice, even little children participating, while hymns of praise and thanksgiving, attuned to joyous music, testify our gratitude to God for His goodness in having permitted us again to complete the reading of that Law which is our greatest treasure.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEW YEAR'S DAY AND DAY OF ATONEMENT.

"In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein."—Lev. xxiii, 24, 25.

GOD ordained the New Year's Festival to be a Day of Memorial, or Day of Remembrance; that is to say, a day on which He calls to mind everything we have done during the past year, and passes judgment on us according to our work. And, as He has placed within every one of us a conscience, He ordained that on that day the *shofar* (ram's horn) should be sounded to awaken that conscience, so that all of us may, on that day, consider our acts, examine our own conduct, and judge ourselves truthfully, even as God judges us.

The duty of self-examination and self-judgment is one of the greatest of the duties we owe to ourselves; and it is right that we should perform this duty not merely once a year, on the Day of Memorial, but every night when we retire to rest. King David tells us, "Stand in awe, and sin not; commune with your heart upon your bed," in the silence of night.

Some of us will, no doubt, fancy such frequent self-examination quite unnecessary, and may think it likely to make us too serious and miserable. But this is a

mistake. Every morning, and perhaps twice or thrice a day, we are accustomed to look at ourselves in the glass, to see if we are clean and tidy, and when we are satisfied with our appearance, the sight does not make us miserable or serious—perhaps, quite the reverse. And so, if the examination of our acts and thoughts, and the judgment of our conscience be satisfactory, and we feel good and clean and spotless in the sight of God, the result is increased happiness.

But God, knowing how apt we are to forget this great duty of self-examination, ordained the Day of Memorial, so that, at least once a year, we should be judged by Himself and our conscience, and so be prepared for the great Day of Atonement, which is to follow nine days after. The *Shofar* (ram's horn), sounding its plaintive and tremulous notes in the synagogue, is meant to arouse us from our fancied security, to awake our slumbering conscience, to remind us of our position. Year by year we are expected to improve, not alone in education and worldly knowledge, but in heart and mind and soul. Every year, as we grow older, and draw nearer to that day which will be the close of our life here and the opening of new life in the world to come, we are expected to become purer and nobler in spirit; every year to have fewer faults and greater virtues; every year to grow more godly; and, as each Day of Memorial comes round, we have to satisfy ourself that this improvement is taking place in our soul, in that part of us which is immortal.

But if not, what then? If, when the trumpet sounds

and we review our ways and works, and examine our heart and soul, we find duties neglected, bad passions encouraged, vices increased, days wasted—what then? Shall we, in despair, go deeper and deeper into wickedness? Shall we waste our time in useless tears? No. God has opened to us the door of escape from evil, has given us the power of repentance and the chance of forgiveness and reconciliation, by ordaining for that purpose His great Day of Atonement. “For on that day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.”

The Day of Atonement is the holiest day of the year, the day which we give entirely to God and to the purifying of our soul by repentance. During that day no thought of the world or of its profits and pleasures may enter our minds. We are to spend the whole day in meditation and prayer. *We are to afflict ourselves*; and tradition has ordained that part of that affliction shall consist in abstaining from food and drink from sunset to sunset. For one whole day we are to forget our body, and to think only of our soul—that “living soul” which God planted within us, when He breathed into our nostrils the breath of life.

Just as we feel how refreshing it is to take a bath, to cleanse our body from impurity, so must we feel how refreshing it is to take means for purifying our soul, and causing our transgressions to pass away year by year, so that, at least once a year, “we may be clean from all our sins before the Lord.”

And truly it is a great privilege, that God should have

given us the great Day of Atonement, to remove from the soul the burden of sin, so that every year we may, as it were, begin a new life with a clean and spotless soul and a light and joyful heart.

How shall we celebrate the Day of Atonement so as to receive pardon for our sins?

The Bible tells us how this may be done. By confession, by penitence, by prayer, and by good deeds. In our prayer-book is to be found the form of public confession of sins, which probably includes every possible kind of transgression. But although it is right that every Jew, worshipping in public, should join with his fellow-worshippers in one general form of confession, yet this is not the confession which can satisfy us as individuals. *Each one of us must make a confession of his own special sins*, not to a priest, as is the custom with members of other faiths, but to God and to ourselves.

Confession is the first step toward betterment. We must feel and own that we are wrong, before we are likely to cease our wrong-doing. And the confession must be accompanied by a firm resolution never to repeat the wrong, and, so far as may be possible, to repair its effects.

Penitence, then, does not consist (as many think it does), of mere sorrowful prayers for forgiveness, nor of mere empty confession. There must be *active penitence*, reparation for the past, and resolution for the future. If we have injured or offended our neighbor, the injury or offence must be made good, before we can hope for forgiveness; and if the wrong has been the

neglect of a duty, we must do our best, by our future efforts, to remedy the effects of our neglect. This is the true penitence of the Day of Atonement. It is little better than a superstition—indeed it is a superstition—to suppose that our iniquities are removed by a miracle, as the result of our prayers and our fasting. The prayers and the fasting are aids to true penitence, for they bring the penitent to a proper frame of mind. But they are useless, unless accompanied by some practical good, such as reparation and works of charity and mercy. The old Jewish sages tell us that “The Day of Atonement expiates sins between man and his Maker, but not sins between man and man; for these, the only atonement is *the redress of the injury.*”

Isaiah the prophet has indeed well expressed the meaning and value of the solemn Day of Atonement when he wrote these stirring words:

“Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast and an acceptable day unto the Lord?”

“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?”

“Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out into thy house? when thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?”

“Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and

thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward."

"Then shalt thou call and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am."

Observed in this spirit, the Day of Atonement cannot fail to work such blessed changes within us as will influence our lives for our own good, and for the welfare of our fellow-men.

CHAPTER VII.

SOCIAL DUTIES.

AFTER God had given the Ten Commandments, He gave to Moses a series of "judgments," that is to say, the laws which were to regulate their manners and their dealings with one another. God might have said in a few words, "Be just and kind to each other;" and this would have included everything. But it would not have been sufficiently practical; so it was necessary to go into detail.

Laws relating to Servitude.

The first series of these judgments referred to slavery, or more properly to servitude. Now, it might be supposed that one of the first laws that would have been given to a nation just released from slavery would have been a law for putting an end to all sorts of bondage. Indeed, many writers who have looked only on the surface, have regarded the Mosaic Law as cruel, because they believe that it permitted slavery. But it will be seen that slavery, in the sense in which we understand it, was distinctly prohibited. God ordains that "he that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." So slavery, such as existed until lately in some parts of America, and

such as still exists in certain Spanish possessions and in parts of Asia and Africa, never could have existed; for it was an act punishable by death to steal a human being.

Still there was a mild kind of slavery permitted. First, strangers who were taken prisoners of war could be bought and sold as bondsmen. Secondly, Hebrews who had been found guilty of certain crimes were sentenced to penal servitude, and were liable to be sold as slaves, but for no longer than six years, unless they, of their own accord, renewed their servitude. "In the seventh year he shall go out free for nothing." Thirdly, Hebrews, who had become so poor that they could not support themselves or their families, might sell themselves into servitude; but their servitude would also expire at the end of the sixth year, unless voluntarily renewed.

No unkindness of any sort was permitted toward servants or slaves. A runaway slave might not be captured and restored to his master. If a master struck his servant or slave, and injured him, however slightly, he was obliged to let him go free. And when the time of servitude was over, the Hebrew slave or servant did not go out into the world empty-handed. He was to have enough to enable him to re-commence his life of freedom. "Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress; of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee, thou shalt give unto him: and thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondsman in the land of Egypt, and the

Lord thy God redeemed thee, therefore I command thee this thing to-day."

Now we understand why the laws of slavery or servitude were the first of the judgments given to the Israelites. God reminds us, You have yourselves been bondsmen; remember, when you become masters, not to be tyrants, like the Egyptians, but to be kind and merciful to those who have to serve you.

Protection of Life and Limb.

If a man killed another intentionally, "with guile," it was wilful murder, and he was surely to be put to death. But if a man killed another by accident, then he was to be exiled to one of the cities of refuge, where his life was to be safe from the "avenger of blood." This exile must have been a terrible punishment for carelessness, and must have prevented many of those accidental deaths, which now too commonly occur from negligence and want of thought.

In olden times, and even in modern times, among barbarous nations, it was the custom for the nearest relative of a person killed, either intentionally or by accident, to be "the avenger of blood," and to slay him who had caused his relative's death. The humane Mosaic code permitted this revenge to be carried out only when the death was the result of a wilful act, clearly proved; and the avenger of blood was not allowed to follow to the city of refuge, and to slay the man who had been guilty of manslaughter, or accidental killing.

Even the life of the murderer was not to be sacrificed, without an absolutely certain proof of his guilt. He could be put to death only on the evidence of at least two witnesses, and these were bound to be eye-witnesses, not merely witnesses bringing circumstantial evidence, or facts tending to criminate the accused, but actual eye-witnesses of the crime.

Other crimes besides murder were punishable by death, such as blasphemy (or speaking disrespectfully of God), worshipping strange gods, Sabbath-breaking, striking a parent, cursing a parent, man-stealing and practising witchcraft; but the punishment of death was so hemmed in by laws of evidence, all in favor of the accused, especially by the law requiring two eye-witnesses of the guilt, that an execution was a very rare occurrence, and the death-punishment might rather be regarded as a preventive—a terror to evil-doers—than a social revenge.

The laws relating to personal injuries, not involving death, have frequently been decried as barbarous. The words used in the Bible are, "Eye for eye; tooth for tooth; hand for hand; foot for foot. Burning for burning; wound for wound; stripe for stripe."

It will be readily understood that this law must have been a terror to evil-doers, and must have prevented many an act of violence. At first sight, it seems to foster the passion for revenge. But in reality it manifests a spirit of mercy. In an age when strong passions and lawlessness prevailed, no better means could have been adopted than this for curbing the spirit of "might

against right," and for protecting the weak against the strong.

Before the giving of the Law, it frequently occurred that the man who had suffered an injury, would himself, or through his relatives, inflict the like injury upon the offender. A sort of lynch-law prevailed, such as even now prevails in some parts of Italy, Corsica, and Sicily, where the principle of personal revenge known as "*vendetta*" exists. The Mosaic law steps in between the injured party and the offender, and declares that the offence must first be proved according to strict rules of evidence, and, if proved, must be regarded as an offence against society, which no longer the individual, but the strong arm of the law must avenge. It was to be no longer a case of private revenge, which might overstep the bounds of justice, and mete out a punishment disproportionate to the offence. It was to be a case of calm, deliberate decision by the judges, according to strict rules of evidence, and the punishment was to be no greater than the offence.

It is absolutely certain that the law of "eye for eye" was never really enforced. It was intended rather as a threat to prevent crimes of violence, and to indicate the extent of the debt due by the perpetrator to his victim. And be it understood, that the law only referred to cases of personal injury intentionally inflicted. The infliction of accidental injury, or even of injuries resulting from a fair fight, was punished differently. The offender was, in such cases, to pay fair compensation, the amount being determined by the judges. We find that if two men

fight, and one injures the other, "and he die not, but keepeth his bed, if he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit; only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed."

The like principle of compensation is enforced in the cases of injuries resulting from negligence. If an ox, known to have been mischievous, gored a man to death, the ox was destroyed, the owner was considered responsible, and deserving of the punishment of death: but he was allowed, in this case, to give compensation to the family of the victim, in lieu of inflicting the punishment of death on the careless owner of the ox.

If an ox injured a servant, the owner of the ox was bound to pay compensation to the master for the loss of service, and the ox was to be killed. It must be understood that in all these precepts the ox is to be regarded only as a representative animal, being the beast most likely to inflict injury; and that similar laws were applicable to injuries resulting from the attacks of other animals.

The law of battlements is another representative law, having for its object the protection of human life from possible danger. It is enacted that "when thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence." No modern code contains laws guarding more jealously the interest of human life and limb. The law just referred to doubtless had greater significance in oriental countries, where most of the roofs

are flat, and where people walk about on the housetops. But the law equally applies to other places besides roofs, and indicates that any source of possible danger to life must be carefully and religiously avoided.

Rights of Property.

It was declared unlawful to remove any boundary mark, defining the ancient limits of land; for the removal of such land-mark might rob a neighbor of part of his possessions.

It was declared unlawful to appropriate any lost property; and the finder was bound to search out the owner, and restore the property to him.

The master might not keep back the wages of his servant, but was bound to pay him promptly.

Any injury done by leaving an open pit unprotected, had to be paid for by the careless owner of the pit.

If one ox killed another, the owners of the two oxen were to share the dead and living animals; but if the assailing ox was known to have been previously mischievous, and the owner had not tied him up, he had to pay ox for ox, but the dead animal became his property.

Compensation was to be made for any injury, to a field or to a vineyard, caused by straying cattle; and in case of the accidental burning of standing crops, the person who kindled the fire had to make restitution.

If an animal or other property, deposited with anyone, was lost or stolen, damaged or destroyed, and the

delinquent could not be discovered, he who had taken charge of the property had to be put on trial; and if he satisfied the judges by a statement on oath that he had not himself been the cause of the loss, theft, or damage, he was absolved. But he had to make good the loss, if the animal or property had been lent to him, the actual owner not being present.

The rights of property might not be unduly or harshly enforced against the very poor, or against the hungry wayfarer. Those who had occasion to work in, or were passing through, a vineyard, might eat some of the grapes, but might not carry any away with them. And a man passing through a cornfield might pluck a few ears of corn with his hand, and eat them; but he was not allowed to cut any with his sickle, and to remove them in bulk.

Rights of Poverty.

The Poor Law of the Mosaic code gave the poor certain rights, whereby they might sustain life, and even recover their lost position.

Charity has always been looked upon by our race as a cardinal virtue. Even the enemies of our faith have always regarded the charity of the Jews as their greatest merit; and the care they have bestowed upon their poor has ever evoked the wonder and admiration of the Gentile world.

However, the charity of our people has probably not been due to mere sentiment, but rather to a habit—the result of the action of our poor-laws—the result, too, of

the fact that the poor, in accordance with those laws, occupy a recognized position among us.

"The poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore, I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor and to thy needy in thy land."

These words left much to the liberality of the individual; but there were certain rights which the poor possessed independently of such liberality. The gleanings of the field were not to be gathered by the farmer, nor was he permitted to reap the corn standing in the corners of the fields. These were to be left for the widow, the fatherless, and the stranger. So, too, the forgotten sheaf, the gleanings of the oliveyard and vineyard, and their second crop, were to be left for the poor and the stranger. We are enjoined to lend money to the poor, a loan being less humiliating than a gift; and a loan to any of our own people must invariably be without interest. "Thou shalt not give him thy money upon interest, nor lend him thy victuals for increase." Interest was allowed to be charged to a non-Israelite, if the money was borrowed for mercantile purposes; but it was not allowed to be charged, if the debt was incurred by a stranger who had fallen into poverty, or who required help for his subsistence.

At the end of every seven years a debt was cancelled. "Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbor shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbor or of his brother, because it is the Lord's release. Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again." But even against

the foreigner no act of oppression was allowed. "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." Nor was the thought of the year of release, and the possible loss of the money, to weigh with the lender. "Beware that there be not a wicked thought in thy heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release is at hand, and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved, when thou givest unto him."

Again it is said, "Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother." Nor was the lender, who took security for a loan, to retain the article pledged, if it was an article of necessity: "If thou at all take thy neighbor's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down. For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep?" A widow's raiment might not be taken in pledge, nor might any implement of daily labor be accepted as a security.

But the greatest of the rights of poverty was enforced by the law of Tithe. Besides the tithe of all produce, which was annually given to the Levites, the Israelite was obliged to bring every third year the tenth part of his increase for the use of the poor. "At the end of three years, thou shalt bring forth all the tithes of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: And the Levite (because he hath no part or inheritance with thee) and the stranger, and the father-

less, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hand which thou doest." In every city, storehouses were established for the reception of the tithe, and from this reserve the needy were enabled to draw when misfortune befell them.

But even these were not the only rights of poverty. The year of release was also the sabbatical year, the year in which the land rested. Although during the sabbatical year the farmer was not doomed to idleness (for he could dig water-tanks, erect farm buildings, construct terraces for his vineyards, repair his hedges and boundary walls), the land had to rest, so as to recruit its exhausted strength. No seed was then sown, no vineyard pruned, and no fruit gathered by the owner, the produce of the sixth year being always sufficient for the consumption of three years. But, though the land was wholly to rest on the seventh year, the crops still grew, the fruits still ripened. All these crops and fruits belonged to the poor, and this beneficent arrangement probably enabled them to clear themselves of debt by payment, when their sense of honor would not permit the year of release to wipe off their obligation to their creditors.

The Land Laws.

Every fiftieth year, the year of Jubilee, all land that had been sold reverted to the original owner, or to his family. So the family of the poor man, who had been

compelled to sell his possessions, became again possessed of worldly means; and thus the institution of the Jubilee, at a time when land was the chief item of wealth, prevented that cardinal evil of civilized life, the concentration of wealth in the few, to the detriment of the many—a circumstance that gives rise to those terrible contrasts of modern society, excessive wealth and excessive poverty.

Except houses in walled cities, which could be sold as a perpetual possession, no landed property could be sold as freehold, “for the land is Mine,” saith the Lord. We are told in the Book of Joshua, how, when the Israelites had arrived in the Promised Land and conquered it, the country was divided by lot among the various tribes, and each man had his share. Thus, at the outset, every one possessed his parcel of land. Now, if a man became poor and sold his land, he or his relatives might, if they had the means, at any time repurchase it, paying for it according to the number of years that had to run to the Jubilee. Even a house in a walled city, which might be sold forever, could be repurchased at the same price by the original owner, at any time within a year of the sale. But, however poor he and his descendants might be, in the year of the Jubilee the land must revert to them, and so their poverty would not be lasting.

All these laws tended to check the greed for acquiring land, seemingly one of the appetites of man, which, if indulged in excess, must tend to the prejudice of his fellow-creatures.

Education.

In these days, when education is becoming general, it is refreshing to turn back to the Mosaic code, and see what provision was there made for the instruction of the young, and especially for their religious education.

The Levites were the appointed instructors of the people: "they shall teach Jacob Thy judgments, and Israel Thy law." From the age of twenty-five to fifty they performed the service of God in the Tabernacle or Temple, and after the age of fifty, "they ceased waiting upon the service," but "ministered with their brethren in the Tabernacle of the congregation to keep the charge."

But though the Levites were thus ordained to be the ministers of religion and the public teachers, the Holy Law established a principle of religious instruction, which was to be by far the most important part of education—the instruction of children by their parents. The laws of God were not to be taught solely by public teachers. "Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way." It was to be the province of parents to instil religion into their own children, not only for the sake of the children, but for their own sakes. Moses tells the people, "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but teach them thy children, and thy children's chil-

dren." To teach religion to our children, is to keep religion alive, both in ourselves and in them. What teaching can be so forcible as a parent's teaching? and what lesson can be so impressive as the lesson given by a father to his children, while walking abroad with them, discoursing of the wonders of Nature and the will of Nature's God?

And so, when God gave ordinances for the guidance of His chosen race, "He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children; That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments."

History shows that many branches of knowledge have been lost, and many arts and sciences utterly forgotten, because parents have neglected the natural duty of teaching their own children. This happened with the ancient Egyptians, greatest of all nations of antiquity in the arts of construction, in science and in philosophy; their knowledge became lost to the world, because instruction was in the hands of a privileged and dominant class—the priests—who used their position for their own aggrandizement, keeping their knowledge to themselves, and leaving the multitude in ignorance and superstition. So with the ancient Chinese, conspicuous among Eastern nations for the cultivation of science and literature: nearly all their knowledge was lost to

the world in the like manner. But our Code maintains knowledge to be the heritage of the whole human race, and not the monopoly of priest or Levite. It declares that there are to be no priestly mysteries or secrets; that education is a public right of the whole nation as well as a private duty of parent to child; that all revealed knowledge is public property; that though "the secret things belong to the Lord our God, those things which are revealed, belong unto us and to our children for ever."

Religious Toleration.

It has been frequently charged against the Mosaic Code that it was wanting in mercy and toleration, inasmuch as it preached the wholesale destruction of certain idolatrous tribes of Canaan. The fact that the Israelites were entrusted with the duty of utterly exterminating those tribes, must be candidly admitted. They were ordered to "save alive nothing that breatheth"; and the fact is certainly a terrible one. Even the women and children were to be slaughtered.

Why this fearful carnage? The Bible answers the question. The seven idolatrous tribes, the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites were to be exterminated, "that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods." What those abominations were we know not precisely, for the Pentateuch only hints at certain of these crimes too fearful to mention. "There must have been pollution in everything

they touched; for we read that Moses ordered all the spoil of Midian to be destroyed, except such things as could pass through the fire, and could thus be purified. There are mental and moral diseases as loathsome and as infectious as any which affect the body. May it not have been even an act of supreme mercy that God, by a terrible act of extermination, prevented the evil from increasing and spreading, till the whole world became a mass of corruption?"

When, then, we read of these fearful wars of extermination, we must not regard them as evincing anything like a want of forbearance or toleration toward followers of a religion differing from our own; and we should rather seek in the Pentateuch for the special laws which teach us how we should treat members of an alien faith.

We are told, "Thou shalt not vex a stranger nor oppress him, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." Even the Egyptians, by whom the Israelites had been so unmercifully treated, were to be requited with charitable forbearance: "Thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian, because thou wast a stranger in his land." The law knew no difference between Jew and Gentile. "If a stranger sojourn with you in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." One law shall be to him that is home-born, and one unto the stranger that sojourneth among you."

A stranger was permitted to join in the Divine service of the Tabernacle and Temple, and was even allowed to bring an offering to the altar of God. "If a stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever be among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire of a sweet savor unto the Lord; as ye do, so shall he do. One ordinance shall be both for you and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance for ever in your generations, as ye are, so shall be the stranger before the Lord." No lesson of religious toleration could be enforced in stronger terms than these. The Bible practically tells us, If God can thus tolerate those who believe not in the true religion, why should not we? "He loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment; love ye therefore the stranger."

There is, however, a kind of spurious tolerance which is not the result of true philosophy or true liberality, but rather the effect of religious indifference. It is common enough to hear persons, indifferent to religion, say that one religion is as good as another. Against such indifference the Bible warns us. There may be no lax attachment to our religion. There must be full and complete loyalty to the One and only true God.

That such loyalty need not detract from our tolerance of the religion of others, may be best proved by reference to a prayer—perhaps the most remarkable in the whole Bible—the prayer of King Solomon at the dedication of the Temple. He craves the blessing of Heaven on the building he had raised to the glory of God, and begs that the prayers and supplications, that

he and his people may there offer, may be favorably answered, and then he craves the same blessing for those who were not of his own faith: "Moreover concerning the stranger which is not of Thy people Israel, but is come from a far country for Thy great name's sake, and Thy mighty hand and Thy outstretched arm; if they come and pray in this house; Then hear Thou from the heavens, even from Thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to Thee for." We know from the Talmudical and other accounts of the Temple that this prayer was not, as some might suppose, the mere individual expression of a wisely liberal king. For it has been found that, surrounding the raised platform on which the Temple was erected, and lying between the outer portico and the Temple proper, there was a great corridor thirty cubits (forty-five feet) wide, which was known as the "court of Gentiles," destined for the worship of strangers, and that this court was many times larger than the "court of the men of Israel."

The prayer of King Solomon, in its application to the Gentile world, was, therefore, no dead letter. The liberal spirit which pervades this noble prayer is the spirit of our holy law. If that spirit had permeated the two creeds which have sprung from our religion, then history would not have had to record, as it unfortunately does, so many stories of persecution, so many reigns of terror, so many orgies of fire and sword.

The Jew, acting in the spirit of the Mosaic code, proclaims all men equal in the sight of God; he hopes and believes that the day will come when all the world will

recognize the one true God. Till then, there may be many religions; there can be but one morality; and so our sages, in the true spirit of toleration, have declared that "the righteous of every faith have their share in the world to come."

CHAPTER VIII.

MORAL DUTIES.

THE restraints of law may prevent men from being criminal, but will not make them virtuous. One constantly meets men who are seemingly good citizens, and who yet are bad, immoral, and irreligious men. But such a contradiction the Mosaic Code does not recognize. "Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God," perfect before God as before the world. It is not sufficient to do one's duty to the country in which we live, to obey its laws, to be patriotic, and to pay our dues to the State. No one can be a truly good citizen without being a virtuous man.

Love of God.

First among the moral duties which belong to every religion is the duty to love, fear, and revere God. It seems so simple a matter to love the Great Being to whom we owe our existence, our food, our clothing, our strength, our faculties, and all we possess, that obedience to this law should be as natural as obedience to the appetites of hunger and thirst. But our faith does not permit us to indulge in a piety that costs us nothing, and that is a mere obedience to a natural in-

stinct; for we are told not merely to love God, but to love Him "with all thine heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

What does this signify? The long array of martyrs, who have sacrificed their lives for the sake of their religion, will afford the best interpretation of these words. With all our heart, the centre of our emotions; with all our soul, the fountain of our thought, our reason, and our faith; with all our bodily powers, with every nerve and every muscle that makes us beings of action—we are to show our love of God, and be prepared to sacrifice everything for Him.

But we Jews are no longer called upon to bear the crown of martyrdom—to die for our faith; how, then, can we show our love of God? The Bible tells us how: "To keep the commandments of the Lord, and His statutes, which I command thee this day, for thy good." We have to keep the Law not only for God's glory or His pleasure, but for *our* good. How can the obedience of a small nation in one of His little planets profit Him, the Creator of the universe? "Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens is the Lord thy God's, the earth also and all that therein is."

Thus, love of God means obedience to His will; and obedience to His will brings happiness.

There is one great point of difference between Judaism and other religions. Although our religion undoubtedly requires of us many sacrifices and restraints, yet Judaism is essentially a happy religion. It is not a religion of long faces, many fasts, and everlasting seri-

ousness. Our Sabbath, for example, is not a puritanical Sabbath. We are not to show our love to God by making ourselves miserable: though we are called a "kingdom of priests," we are not to be a nation of monks and nuns.

We are not to groan away our lives. Although several fast-days were instituted to commemorate sad events that had befallen our people, on one day only in the year does the Law bid us afflict our souls. We are to "serve the Lord with gladness, enter His presence with a song." Our religion and our happiness are to go hand-in-hand. Our love of God and obedience to His laws are to make us happy.

But though the love of God is a duty enjoined by every religion, there is something special about that duty, as enjoined upon the Jew. Other religions have their secondary deities, or demi-gods, or mediators; but the God of the Jew is the One sole God, the Creator of the universe, who works by His own great power, and who, nevertheless, may be approached in prayer and supplication by the humblest of His creatures, without any mediator. And in these words does He declare His sovereign power: "See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no God with Me; I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand."

Other faiths have regarded God as a deity who will not forgive without the mediation of a being, half-God, half-man, or that of a priest. Our religion represents God as a "God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering,

and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin," so that we need no one to crave pardon on our behalf. The priests of other faiths have invented the terrible idea of hell, with the devil as its presiding deity; and this hell they represent as a place of eternal torment for the souls of the wicked and the unbeliever.

Our religion knows no such sacrilegious ideas. It cannot allow that God, who claims our love, and whose universe abounds with proofs of His kindness, can be capable of meting out *eternal* punishment to a human soul. It cannot conceive that the same God, who gave us, in His code, a true message of love, in which we are enjoined to be kind to our neighbors, our dependents, and even to the helpless brutes, could inflict everlasting torture on the souls of those whom He created in His own image. Would He, then, permit the existence of a devil, or god of evil, side by side with Himself, to counteract His goodness and to check His mercy? "There is no god beside Me," is the Divine declaration.

The idea that a loving God should inflict eternal punishment is too revolting to be even contemplated. We are told to fear God, to fear His displeasure, not as we would fear a tyrant King, but as we would fear to incur the displeasure of a parent, or to forfeit his love. When He speaks of punishing us, it is in the language of a wise father to an erring child. He does not threaten us with eternal punishment. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In

a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer."

This is the God we are told to love with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our might. Our forefathers were, therefore, ordered not only to worship no other gods, but not even to mention their names. They were to overthrow their altars, to break down their pillars, burn their groves, and hew down their graven images. Moreover, superstition of every sort had to be destroyed. Hence there were laws for the prevention of those superstitious rites, practised by the priests of idolatrous nations, who recognized powers other than the Great Power who rules the universe. So we find the command against Moloch-worship, divination, witchcraft, the observing of times, and the other so-called black arts, by means of which the priests of ancient religions were wont to influence the vulgar and the ignorant.

Finally, the duty of prayer, as an outward mode of exhibiting our love of God, must be the spontaneous homage of the heart; not an irksome duty, like a tax unwillingly paid. It must be the voluntary outpouring of the heart, not alone in the set phrases of the prayer-book, but in the unspoken language of our soul.

For as, at the supreme moments of life, soul speaks to soul without word or sound or utterance, so can man, at all times, hold silent communion with his Maker; he can raise his soul upon the wings of prayer, and render silent praise to the One and only God.

Respect for Parents and for the Aged.

The Fifth Commandment has already told us something about the duties we owe to our parents. But it is not only in the Decalogue that those duties are enforced. In the 19th chapter of Leviticus, we find, "Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father." In the 21st chapter of Exodus, death is ordained as the punishment of the child who strikes or who curses a parent; and in Deuteronomy we read, "Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother."

First and foremost among the duties that we owe to our fellow-creatures are those that we owe to our parents. These duties are impressed upon us strongly by nature; for without being taught them, every right-minded child fulfils them by intuition. The Bible, therefore, justly treats the wicked, irreverent son as an unnatural monster not worthy to live. The bad son is certain to be a bad man, and a bad citizen, in every relation of domestic and social life. He is a social pest, and is consequently worthy of death. In the 21st chapter of Deuteronomy, we read about the punishment incurred by the stubborn and rebellious son. The men of his city were to stone him to death. Throughout the Bible, and in our later records, there is no mention of capital punishment for the offence of a son against his parents; so we may hope that there was never cause for such punishment, and that the law, severe as it seems, was rather declared as a terror and a warning to those who might be apt to disregard the duties they owed to their parents.

Closely connected with the laws as to filial duties is that which ordains respect to the aged, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God." For, one aspect of this law, as well as that relating to assaults on parents, must not be forgotten. It was a custom among many barbarous nations to slay old people who were overwhelmed with the infirmities of age; and this act of murder was even committed by sons on their parents.

Although such a custom is shocking to contemplate, it is, perhaps, no worse than might be expected from nations with whom brute force and physical strength were the only qualities that were valued. The Mosaic code puts old age on a different basis. The aged are not to be regarded as mere encumbrances, burdening the world with their weaknesses. They are not to be cast aside when their work is over, and their power of work is spent. They are to be treated reverently and respectfully; for though their strength of body may have departed, they have acquired knowledge and accumulated experience, as useful to the world as physical prowess. And this is the meaning of King Solomon, when he says, "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." "The glory of young men is their strength, and the beauty of old men is the gray head."

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The duty involved in this law is one that is included in almost every code of morality and in almost every re-

ligious system. There is a well-worn tale told of two learned and rival doctors of the Talmud, Hillel and Shammai, which bears upon this commandment, and indicates the importance attached to it by Judaism. A scoffing heathen applied to Shammai, requesting him to teach him the laws of Judaism in the short space of time that he could stand on one foot. Shammai, in anger, sent the scoffer away. Thus repulsed, he went to Hillel, and made the same request of him. And Hillel replied, "Do thou not unto another what thou wouldst not have another do unto thee. This is the whole law; the rest is mere commentary."

The precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is a protest against selfishness—the origin of every vice, and itself the greatest vice. If you love your neighbor as yourself, you will be just to him, you will not wrong him in any way, you will not hate, despise, or dishonor him; you will help him in misfortune, and you will judge him charitably.

But, it might be argued, this law to love one's neighbor as one's self is a little unreasonable—nay, impossible. How can any one love his neighbor as dearly as he loves himself? Self-love is deeply implanted in every human heart. How, then, can we be expected to love our neighbor as ourselves?

Your own happiness and welfare depend on the happiness and welfare of others. No king was ever happy whose subjects were unhappy. No head of a household can be happy, if his family and servants are in a constant state of discord. No employer can be happy,

if his work-people are discontented, sullen in their demeanor, and perpetually at war with him. Thus the happiness of every individual depends on the happiness of those with whom he comes in daily contact. If, therefore, you truly love yourself, and prize your happiness, love your neighbor as much, and prize his happiness. No one can possibly be truly, permanently, and honorably happy at the expense of his fellow-creatures. Wealth, with its unequal distribution, will always create different social grades, and on some the burden of work will ever fall more heavily than on others. It does not follow that this burden of work entails unhappiness. On the contrary, those who have to work too hard are not more unhappy than those who lead a lazy, unprofitable life. Still, poverty has its undoubted evils; and it is the duty of the rich to soften the hardships that afflict the poor.

Unfortunately, in our artificial state of society, the relations of employer and employed are far from satisfactory, both frequently forgetting the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The master is frequently too exacting to his servant, the servant too careless of his employer's interests; and hence arise those unhappy relations between employer and employed, which have so often culminated in trade-disputes, outrages, and strikes. A selfish policy never thrives. There are in this country industries which have prospered mainly because masters and men have treated one another as fellow-workers with a common interest, each loving his neighbor as himself, seeking his wel-

fare, and looking for happiness in the happiness of his fellows. But there are other industries which have failed because masters and men have tried to make as much as possible out of each other, regardless of all considerations but their own selfish aims.

Nor is it only in the conflict between labor and capital that this primary law of morality is so often forgotten. The disputes between individuals which find their way into the law-courts, and the disputes between nations which give rise to sanguinary wars, all have their origin in the neglect of this same law. The principles of right and wrong are sufficiently clear, so that no man need wrong his neighbor in ignorance. If he loved his neighbor as himself, he would not wrong him, and would no more think of damaging the interests of his neighbor than of endangering his own.

But as regards nations, the law has greater force. War, that dread curse, which has converted many of the fairest gardens of the earth into cemeteries; which has changed friends into fiends, human beings into brutes, and aroused passions which only the hand of death could subdue—war would have no existence, if every nation, instead of envying, despising, or hating, would love its neighbor as itself. Patriotism becomes the worst of vices when, forgetful of that duty, a nation wages a war of aggression against a neighbor whose land it covets.

War is, in sober truth, a hideous thing; and so men strive to clothe its hideousness in decent garb. They hide the blood beneath the crimson uniform, and stifle

the groans of wounded men with music. They drown the sobs and sighs of orphans and of widows with songs of victory, and call the murderous work of battle a work of glory.

But, if the truth be told, war is at best but wholesale homicide, the aggressors but wholesale murderers; aggressive war, at best, but wholesale robbery; the nation longing for its neighbor's lands, but wholesale plunderers and thieves.

And of the wars waged or pretended to be waged for a principle of honor, none would exist if honor meant but honesty, and glory meant God's glory and not man's. His glory is to "make the whole world kin," to make this world a world of peace and happiness, to make man's life "like days of heaven upon earth." Therefore He gave to man this law of love—"to love his neighbor as himself"—to widen the sphere of human sympathies, to make the earth one nation, and all mankind fellow-citizens.

Honesty and Truth.

The duty of truthful, honest dealing is set forth in the Third and Eighth Commandments. It is repeated in Leviticus: "Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another." "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbor." "Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, a just hin, shall ye have."

The arm of the law, in all civilized countries, protects the weak against the strong, and prevents direct

robbery by the highwayman. But there is an indirect robbery which too often evades the law, and is unfortunately very prevalent in most commercial countries. To deal falsely, to misrepresent wares and merchandise to be what they are not, to lie to a purchaser as to the value or cost of a commodity, to give short weight, are all forms of commercial immorality which sap the foundations of society, and yet by some are regarded almost as matters of course and mere incidents of business. The evils engendered by such loose principles of dealing are incalculable. A general distrust and suspicion take the place of confidence. The purchaser is bound to waste his time in a vigilant examination of what he buys, lest he may be defrauded; and, notwithstanding his vigilance, he may yet be cheated. Goods have to be weighed and measured over and over again, lest, at some point of transfer or transit, something may have been abstracted. Nor must it be imagined that acts of dishonesty exist only among small traders. Recent experience has shown that merchants of the highest reputation have been guilty of gigantic frauds; and when those frauds were discovered, their plea was simply that they were quite the usual thing, and that most people did as they did.

Distrust, suspicion, and loss of time are not the only evils resulting from commercial dishonesty. Dishonesty breeds dishonesty. The honest trader finds that he cannot compete successfully with the dishonest one, and becomes dishonest like his neighbor; and so the standard of morality becomes generally degraded.

Many think this condition of things harmless, because every man of the world is prepared for it, and believes nothing but the evidences of his senses. But, in truth, the results are very serious, and, most serious of all, not to the intended victim, but to the dishonest trader himself. His notion of honor becomes vitiated and blunted. He acquires loose ideas regarding honesty and truth.

But God has declared that "all that do such things and all that do unrighteously are an abomination unto the Lord thy God"; and it is surely not difficult to imagine that He, who is the Essence of Truth and Justice, must abominate those who steal, or deal falsely with, or lie one to another.

Truth is the basis of all morality. "A righteous man hateth lying," said King Solomon. He who adheres to truth will be righteous in all things. Nor must the truthfulness consist merely in abstaining from a direct lie. Equivocation, flattery, misrepresentation, and duplicity are all forms of lying as hateful as the bold and direct lie, perhaps more so. "Deliver my soul from lying lips and a deceitful tongue," is the prayer of King David. "Guard my tongue from evil, and my lips from uttering deceit," is our own thrice-repeated daily prayer. Truth is the guardian of the soul. If it retain truth, it will retain innocence; and contact with the world will leave it unharmed and unstained.

"Who," asks King David, "shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn de-

ceitfully; He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."

Slander and False Report.

"Thou shalt not raise a false report," applies not alone to individuals, but to things and circumstances. Great injury may be done by publishing false reports or rumors, though they be not intended to injure any one. The law just quoted is directed against exaggeration, misrepresentation of facts, and misstatement of events. The love of the marvellous is strongly implanted in the human mind. It is curious to notice how easily people believe what they are told; and the more marvellous a tale is, the more ready people are to believe it. "It does no one any harm," is the common reply to the censure of such false reports. But, both to the individual and to society, it does much harm, though the reputation of the individual, who may be the subject of the report, may remain untouched.

The lies that have been told in the name of religion have been truly frightful in results. It is not too much to say that the true interests of religion have, in all ages, greatly suffered through the raising of reports of false miracles by the over-zealous priests of religions other than our own. "Truth, above everything," should be the motto of priest, preacher, and teacher. "As for Truth, it endureth and is always strong; it liveth and conquereth for evermore." The interests of religion are always identical with the interests of truth. The great God of Truth does not want a lie to be told in His ser-

vice. He declares, "The prophet which shall presume to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak . . . shall die."

"Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people" is another and more direct law against slander. No matter if the tale be true, and your neighbor be worthy of blame, you are not to be a tale-bearer. However blameworthy he may be, the fact is no excuse for your hating him. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt in nowise rebuke thy neighbor, and suffer no sin to rest upon him." This law represents the true principle of religious charity, and is, at the same time, a caution to those self-righteous people, who take delight in reviling their less religious neighbors. Such people, who are "righteous overmuch," as King Solomon calls them, are directed to show their piety, not by looking down with supercilious glance upon their less pious neighbors, but by remonstrating with them privately, and by gently winning them over to the path of virtue.

Purity.

"Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God."

Though there are very many ordinances which relate to the subject of moral purity, this one comprehends all the rest. For it enjoins us to be modest, chaste, and pure; it bids husband and wife to be faithful to each other; it bids us to be decent in our conduct, demeanor, and conversation, and even in our thoughts, and so to "be perfect with the Lord."

Forgiveness.

Most difficult of all duties is the duty of forgiveness; for forgiveness is not always within our control. Still God commands us: "Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord"; and a little consideration will show that forgiveness of an enemy is a duty that we owe equally to God, to ourselves, and to our fellow-creatures.

The sooner an injury is forgotten, the better for our own peace of mind; moreover, by forgiving others, we make ourselves worthy of forgiveness by the Almighty. "To the merciful, God will show Himself merciful."

This is the highest charity, the greatest kindness of man to his fellow. To give alms to the poor, to help the distressed, to be kind to the stranger, are all easy and pleasant duties; but to love our enemy so far as to forego vengeance and bear him no grudge, is the highest form of virtue, because it is so much at variance with our strongest impulses.

Kindness to Animals.

God gave man "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

Man was to have control over the animal creation, but he was to remember that all birds and beasts and creeping things were yet God's creatures, all alike objects of His loving care.

Accordingly, when God gave us the Law, He impressed upon us the duty of kindness to animals. For seven days after birth, no animal was permitted to be taken away from its mother. If an animal had to be slaughtered, it might not be killed on the same day as one of its young, lest, perchance, the one might see the suffering of the other. An ox was not permitted to be muzzled while treading out the corn, lest it might be irritated at being prevented, in the presence of plenty, from satisfying its hunger. Nor was an ox permitted to be yoked with an ass at the plough, lest the pace or tension of one animal might overtax the strength of the other. No animal might be worked on the Sabbath-day, so that even the poor dumb brute shared with man the blessing of rest. It was commanded that any one seeing an animal fall beneath its burden, must render help to raise it. Even "if thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden and wouldst forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him." It is pronounced to be a duty to lead back an animal that has strayed, even if it be owned by an enemy.

During the wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness, all animals that were slaughtered for food had to be brought for that purpose to the door of the tabernacle, and it was unlawful to slay an animal elsewhere. The blood of the slaughtered animal was sprinkled on the altar, and the fat was burnt. In this manner, the act of slaying an animal for food was dignified and promoted to a religious act, and there was no chance of any wanton cruelty. When the Israelites reached the Prom-

ised Land, this restriction was removed, and they were allowed to slay animals anywhere.

The law, which thus first gave to the priests the province of slayers of the cattle, probably gave rise to the custom always prevalent among the Jews, even down to the present time, of appointing men of high religious characters as slaughterers of animals used for food. The best guarantee was thus afforded that the prescribed rules should be conscientiously observed, and also that the animal should be slain with the least possible pain.

The Jew, consequently, does not, as a rule, indulge in that kind of sport which consists of killing. He does not shoot pigeons, grouse, and pheasants for the mere pleasure of taking deadly aim at them. The animals he requires for food he has slain by the most expert, thus avoiding all needless torture.

If we are asked why God made so many laws for the protection of animals from cruelty, we may reply that the laws enjoining kindness to dumb animals form only part of the great Law of Love which the Pentateuch inculcates. If man be taught by these laws to be kind to dumb animals, will he not all the more be kind to his fellow-men? Will not he, who spares pain to his ox, spare pain also to his servant, and treat his dependents with kindness and with brotherly love?

CHAPTER IX.

SANITARY LAWS.

THE laws relating to health are too numerous to mention in detail; and it will be sufficient to treat of them in broad outlines.

The main principles of the laws of purification, as laid down in Leviticus and Numbers, appear to be that as infectious diseases are mostly communicated by contact, all cases of infection are to be isolated; that all contact with any centre of infection is to be avoided; that when such contact has been unavoidable, there must be, first, segregation, to prevent the spread of infection, and finally purification, before the infected person is re-admitted into society.

Every corpse was considered a possible centre of infection. Hence, those who touched a corpse, or who were under the same roof with a corpse, or who touched a grave, had to purify themselves on the third day, and it was not till the seventh day that they were declared clean, after having again purified themselves, washed their clothes, and bathed themselves in water.

In quite recent time, medical men have come to the conclusion that infectious diseases can be stamped out only by the most careful system of isolation. Nevertheless, it will be seen that the sanitary laws of the Penta-

teach clearly enforce this principle, and point to isolation as the first duty incumbent on a patient suffering from communicable disease, or on a person bearing the germs, or even the possible germs, of infection; and it is declared that he who "purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel."

The great scourge of the East was, and in many places still is, leprosy; and in the thirteenth chapter of Leviticus will be found the most exact and stringent rules for the prevention of the spread of this malady by contagion or infection. Infected clothing was burned; an infected house had to be first emptied, the infected parts of the building removed, and the walls scraped. Then, if the infection proved chronic, the whole house had to be razed to the ground, and the materials removed to an unclean place, never to be used again. The priest acted as physician. It was he who had to declare the patient, the garment, or the house clean or unclean. Before the re-admission of the leper into society, certain sacrificial rites had to be performed; but, above all, certain ablutions had to be made by the patient, and his hair had to be shaved off.

In these times, when cleanliness is known to be an essential condition of health, it will not be a subject of surprise to find the washing of the clothes and the bathing of the flesh with water ordained as material acts of purification. If these simple remedies alone had been prescribed for the prevention of infection, they would doubtless have been disregarded and neglected; for

there is a tendency of the uneducated mind to respect a remedy of a complex, and to disregard one of a simple kind; just as we find that Naaman doubted the efficacy of the seven simple ablutions in the Jordan, prescribed by Elisha as a cure for his leprosy, because the cure was not accompanied by any incantation or ceremonial.

But probably this was not the only reason why the ablutions were accompanied by priestly rites. It must be remembered that many diseases take their origin in intemperance, excess, and other infractions of the moral law. So it was a salutary act to bring the influences of religion to bear upon the patient, not only with the object of impressing upon him the need of an amended life, but of reminding him that, though God delegates His healing powers to man, the Great Physician is God Himself, to whom we owe life and health and every blessing.

The law for the disposal of refuse by burial in the earth is truly a remarkable one. The modern system which permits such matter to pollute our rivers, is now acknowledged to be a gigantic blunder; and the best authorities are now of opinion that, though storm-waters should be led into the rivers, sewage should be led into the earth, to enrich the soil, and reproduce the food whence it takes its origin.

We have already referred to the law which declared unclean all who touched a corpse, or a grave, or who happened to be under the same roof with a corpse, and which required their purification before they could be re-admitted into society. But the law was much more

stringent as regards the priests. These were not permitted to come near a corpse under any condition, except on the death of a near relative, namely, a parent, wife, child, brother, or unmarried sister; and, even in these exceptional circumstances, they had to be purified, and to remain apart for seven days.

The sanitary importance of this rule must be clear, seeing that in the East the diseases most prevalent are contagious; that a corpse, which, in warm climates, decomposes rapidly, is a highly probable source of infection; and that the priests, being also the physicians, if allowed to touch the dead, might communicate mortal disease from the dead to the living.

Our people have always regarded their dead with the greatest veneration. The careful watching of the corpse from the moment of death till the funeral hour, the reverent ablution of the dead, the following of the remains to the grave with all marks of respect, regardless of the rank or station of the deceased, and the rule which assigns to each corpse, even to that of a pauper, a separate grave as an everlasting possession—all these customs, indicating an affectionate tenderness for the dead, seem strangely at variance with those Mosaic laws which treat the human corpse as a thing defiling him that touches it. What, then, can be the object of these laws, apart from their sanitary purpose?

A glance at the history of certain ancient nations, and even at the customs of some religions of our own day, will furnish us with a reply. In ancient Egypt, the country where the Israelites had so long dwelt, the

treatment of the dead was the great absorbing thought of the living. To build a grand tomb for himself was the first thought of every Egyptian. The greatest pains were taken to preserve the bodies of the dead. The more perishable parts were removed, and the body embalmed, wrapped tightly in bands of linen to prevent the access of air; and the preservation of the body from decay was considered essential to the happiness of the departed soul. The chief books in the Egyptian literature were those relating to the funeral ritual. Before the tombs of the Egyptians, altars were erected, and on these altars their relatives offered sacrifices. In times of difficulty or danger, they would consult the dead, and pray for their intervention, or for their advice. The privilege of burial was not allowed to all. Some were refused burial, and had to be kept forever by their families, standing upright, in closed coffins, against a wall inside their houses, a lasting disgrace to their relatives. Poor people, who died in debt, were refused burial; and, at one time, a creditor could make his debtor give as security the mummy of his father. The City of the Dead was under the control of the priests of Egypt, who had high privileges, and possessed one-third of the land. Their influence over the people was enormous, chiefly derived from their power either to award honors or to offer indignities to the dead.

Thus we see the evil resulting from the gigantic corpse-traffic, which became at last the aim and end of religion in Egypt.

No wonder that Jacob, fearful that his body might

become an object of worship for future generations, exclaimed as a last request to his son, "Bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt;" or that Joseph, with like apprehension, made the children of Israel swear that they would carry his remains from Egypt to Canaan.

In our own days, there are superstitions as bad, and perhaps more mischievous. In the churches of Catholic countries will be found bones of so-called saints, who lived centuries ago, reverently preserved as relics, and kept as objects of idolatry. Many of these are alleged by the priests to be capable of working miraculous cures even now; and, as the priests hold aloft these human relics—perhaps a fleshless skull, or perhaps a shrunk human hand, or perhaps only a single bone—with great pomp and ceremony, the assembled multitude bend the knee, and accord to these remains a worship which should belong to the Supreme God alone.

No wonder, then, that God should bid His people regard human remains and the graves of the dead as unclean. No wonder that He should forbid His priests even to go near a dead body. If the priests might not go near a corpse, how much less might they consult the dead, or offer a spurious worship at their tombs, or present sacrifices at their graves, or work pretended miracles with the fragment of a corpse?

One cannot but admire, with rapt wonder, the Divine foresight, whereby *all* graves were declared unholy and unclean, and whereby, when our great legislator, Moses, died, his burial was so arranged that "no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

Not upon the body, but on the *spirit* of the departed are we to bestow our thoughts; on their example and their influence; on their worth and on their work. Let us think of them as spirits, rejoicing in the presence of their Maker, working His will in the better world, as they worked His will in this.

The laws relating to food may be all classed under the head of sanitary laws; for they have been ordained in the interests of health, moral and physical.

When God blessed Noah and his sons after the flood, He delivered into their hand the whole animal world, and told them, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you, even as the green herb, have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." In those early days, there were no dietary restrictions but these two:—a living animal might not be mutilated to afford food, and the blood of an animal might not be eaten.

These laws were repeated by Moses, but with far greater detail and circumstance. We read in Leviticus, "Moreover, ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings. Whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people." With even greater stringency is the law repeated later: "Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood, I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his peo-

ple. For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood." In Deuteronomy the same injunction is repeated: "Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water." And further in the same chapter we are told, "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood, for the blood is the life, and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh. Thou shalt not eat it; thou shalt pour it on the earth as water. Thou shalt not eat it, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee."

What can be the object of this prohibition, so frequently repeated? The Bible gives us as one reason that the blood was used upon the altar as an atonement sacrifice; but this cannot be the chief reason.

The real reason must remain a mystery, until the great problem of life is solved. We know nothing of the processes of vital action; but we know that the blood is the vehicle of life to the animal frame—the circulating medium, maintaining vitality in every organ of the body, and feeding the brain, the fountain of thought and action. We know, from the influence of certain narcotics, that what passes into the blood after digestion, affects the brain; sometimes acting on the intellectual, and sometimes on the moral, qualities of man; sometimes weakening and sometimes stimulating those powers. How the brain is acted upon, we know not;

but we know enough to feel sure that what we eat and drink *does* affect the mental and spiritual part of man. What then is more probable than that, if the blood of a brute animal enters our frames, some of the qualities of that animal may become communicated to us through its blood, and that part of the nature of the animal may thus enter our nature, and debase and brutalize us?

Experience lends a strong probability to this view; and, if the view be correct, the precepts so strongly prohibiting blood are easily understood.

Our traditional mode of slaughtering cattle, by cutting the throat, was evidently ordained for the purpose of draining from the body of the animal the greatest possible quantity of blood; and the custom adopted in all Jewish households, of steeping meat in water for half an hour and keeping it afterward strewn with salt for an hour before cooking it, has, doubtless, for its object, the extraction of any blood still remaining.

When we further examine the laws prohibiting the use of certain animals for food, the leading principle of those laws seems to be that all animals which themselves feed on blood, are pronounced unclean, and are prohibited. No quadruped might be eaten except such as had cloven feet, and also chewed the cud. Such animals as had only one of these characteristics (such as the camel, the hare, and the swine), were regarded as unclean; their carcasses might not even be touched, much less might they be used for food. The law, limiting the eatable animals to the cloven-footed only, excluded the whole range of carnivora, or animals that

eat flesh. Flesh-eating animals are, of necessity, blood-eating animals; so it is not difficult to see why they are prohibited.

No fish might be eaten except such as had fins and scales. Twenty species of birds are also enumerated as unclean, and forbidden as food. All worms and creeping things, and all insects, with the few exceptions enumerated, are also prohibited; and it is quite possible, although not absolutely capable of proof, that nearly all those prohibited animals are, in some degree, carnivorous, and consequently blood-eating.

It would be impossible, with our present limited knowledge, to assign a special sanitary reason for the prohibition of each one of these animals as food. We know but little of the habits of most animals, and we know absolutely nothing of their inner life. But, inasmuch as all the prohibited animals are described as unclean, there must doubtless be something in their structure and habits rendering them unwholesome as objects of human food. The filthy habits of the swine, and the shocking diseases to which it is liable, and which it engenders in those who feed on it, are very well known; and in modern times it has been thoroughly recognized by medical men that swine's flesh is unwholesome food, even if the animal itself may have been healthy when slain. Swine will eat any garbage, however decomposed, and they have even been known to devour their own young. The forbidden birds include several which are known to live on carrion of the filthiest kind, and to delight in blood. The Law wisely describes them as

abominations, not even to be touched, when dead, much less eaten.

Certain kinds of fat, specified by tradition, and including the particular fat used for sacrifice, were forbidden to be eaten; as was also the flesh of any animal that was accidentally wounded, or that died of disease. This last precept has given rise to the excellent traditional practice among the Jewish people, that all animals slain for food must be examined by skilled persons, with the object of ascertaining whether the animal was free from disease. In case of disease being discovered, the animal is pronounced unfit for food (*t'refah*).

The law also forbids us to "seethe a kid in its mother's milk." The word *gedi*, translated "kid," here means the young of any mammal. The command seems, at first sight, a strange one; and its meaning has been questioned by many learned men. The great Maimonides (himself a physician of eminence) considers the prohibition to be solely a sanitary one, as he regards the mixture of flesh and milk too indigestible a food; but the more probable reason is that there is something cruel and repugnant to natural sentiment in boiling a young animal in the milk that was destined for its own nourishment; and there is an analogy between this precept and that which forbade the killing of any animal and its progeny on the same day.

It is certain that the Jews have always abstained from such an unnatural mixture of food.

Apart from sanitary considerations, there is the moral

influence which such laws exercise, by reason of the restraints which they place on our appetites. That the Jews are distinguished for temperance, is universally acknowledged. As convivial in their habits as any of their fellow-citizens, our people are yet moderate in their enjoyments; and drunkenness finds no place among the vices of the Jews. For this immunity from intemperance, and from many of those diseases which affect other races, we are indebted to the dietary laws, which, while they permit us to enjoy, in moderation, the good things of life, place a curb on our appetites, so as to foster in us the quality of self-restraint.

CHAPTER X.

FASTS AND FEASTS.

EVERY nation that has a history has certain anniversaries which are marked as red-letter days in its calendar. But most nations willingly or wilfully forget their past misfortunes; their self-love and vanity prompting them to hold in remembrance only their glories.

With us, it is different. Not taht our self-love and vanity are less than our neighbors'. But our history is different. For since we lost the land of our inheritance, our history as been, with few and comparatively short exceptions, one long tale of persecution and humiliation.

But now, thanks to God, we Jews, in this great country, and in most parts of the civilized world, live in peace and liberty, our lives and property secure, and we begin to regard our past sad history almost as a frightful nightmare, scarcely a series of real facts.

It has been the custom of our people, as each anniversary came round, to praise God for good and evil alike, to celebrate our past glories with heartfelt gratitude, and to call to mind our past sufferings with lamentations, but also with thanksgiving. For, in darkness or in light, in sorrow or in joy, the Jew still felt himself the surviving heir to a precious heritage, and, confident in

the future of his race, was grateful to transmit to unborn generations that heritage, in all its purity.

Four of these sad anniversaries are not only historical, but biblical. They are mentioned as fasts in the Book of Zechariah—the 17th day of *Tamuz*, the 9th day of *Ab*, the 3d day of *Tishri*, and the 10th day of *Tebeth*.

The fast of *Tamuz* commemorates the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon; the fast of *Ab*—the saddest anniversary of all—the destruction of the First Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and the destruction of the Second Temple by Titus, the Roman General. The fast of Gedaliah on the 3d day of *Tishri* is the anniversary of the murder of Gedaliah, chief of the remnant of our people, who clung to Judea after the destruction of the First Temple. From that date, the independence of the Jews ceased, until the restoration in the days of Cyrus. The fast of *Tebeth* commemorates the commencement of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

Reading these dry details, which seem a mere catalogue of misfortunes, it is difficult to realize their full import. But the narrative of the destruction of the First Temple, as detailed in the last chapter of the second book of Kings, and in the last chapter of the second Book of Chronicles, and the history of the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, as described by Josephus, set forth vividly the horrors attending these national calamities, when the city was consumed with famine, so that "there was no bread for the people of the land;" when the be-

siegers ruthlessly slew every one in the fated city, "and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age."

Never in the world's history has such a siege taken place as that which finally overthrew the sacred city; never has a city been so completely destroyed as was Jerusalem—destroyed so that scarcely a vestige of its ancient glory now remains, save a few huge pieces of masonry, the foundations of its outer walls, and some underground vaults, cisterns, and aqueducts, beneath or near the site of the sacred Temple-enclosure.

Perhaps human nature is so constituted that we may find it hard to lament the loss of what we, personally, never possessed, and thus many thoughtless people may smile when they are told to mourn for the loss of Jerusalem. But when we read in the Bible and in works of history what Jerusalem was; and call to mind that that Temple was *the* place on all the earth chosen by God as His Holy House, the religious centre of the chosen people, and that, instead of that glorious heritage, we have nothing left to us but the Written Word—no land of our own, no Temple of our own, no House of God, where the Jew can worship the One and only God—then, perhaps, if we are fervent Jews, we may realize what we have lost.

Still our past history is not all gloom. Our history is, indeed, a history of persecutions, but it is also a history full of providential escapes. Two of these marvellous escapes from dangers, which might have utterly exterminated us, but for the protecting hand of Providence,

we celebrate by festivals of joy and gladness—the feast of *Purim*, and the feast of *Hanukah*.

Who can read the Book of Esther without discerning, in the wonderful chain of events therein related, the guiding hand of an all-directing Providence?

When, therefore, we celebrate the Feast of Purim, as our forefathers did in Shushan, “with light and gladness, and joy and honor,” we must keep foremost in our minds the recognition of God’s government of the world; and when we read, in the Book of Esther, how a despised Jew and Jewess became, by rare acts of courage and self-devotion, the saviours of their nation, and placed on record an imperishable memorial of their marvellous escape; and how, finally, the Jew Mordecai, raised to the post of first minister to the king of one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, yet remained steadfast to his faith and race, we must, indeed, acknowledge that it was the hand of the Lord of Hosts that had wrought these things.

The events that gave rise to *Hanukah*, the Feast of Dedication, are described in detail in the Books of the Maccabees, in the Apocrypha. About the facts contained in the Books of the Maccabees there can be no doubt, as they receive ample confirmation from other historical sources.

About two centuries before the Romans destroyed the Second Temple, Judea was ravaged by the army of Antiochus Epiphanes, King of Syria, who penetrated to Jerusalem, and even took possession of the sanctuary. Resistance seemed useless. The priests fled

from the Temple, and the Syrians there set up their idolatrous worship, with all its abominations. They then tried to convert the Jews to their own degrading religion. The ordinances of Judaism were proscribed, the worship of God was forbidden, and all were ordered, upon pain of death, to bow down before the idols of the Syrians. Thousands of Jews died the death of martyrs, because they persisted in clinging to their own religion. Many, weakened by privations and torture, became, or pretended to become, converts to heathenism, and many fled to distant parts of Judea, taking refuge in the mountain caverns.

All seemed hopeless, and it appeared as if Jews and Judaism were about to vanish forever from the face of the earth, when suddenly there arose a family of priests, who took upon themselves the apparently impossible task of resisting the idolatrous invaders. These heroes, consisting of an old man named Mattathias and his five sons, were the Maccabees, or Hasmoneans; and they commenced their work of salvation for Israel by bidding defiance to the Syrians, when they invaded Modin, their village home. For at Modin the invaders had set up altars for the worship of their idols, and these the Maccabees, jealous for the True God, indignantly swept away.

The Syrians, accustomed everywhere to receive submission, were amazed at this boldness and tried to bribe Mattathias and his sons, by promises of honors and riches, to yield to the king's commands, and to embrace the idolatrous religion. But the Maccabees in-

dignantly refused; and, rallying around them a handful of villagers, whom they had inspired with a patriotism and religious fervor like their own, they engaged in battle with the hosts of Syria, and, though largely outnumbered, conquered.

No sooner had they gained their first victory, than the Maccabees reëstablished the worship of the True God, and then proceeded to organize a small army with which to liberate their country. But the old priest, Mattathias, did not live to see the end of the conflict. He died, leaving his sons to continue the task he had commenced, and inciting them, by his last words, to the work of regenerating and reviving the nation and the religion he loved so well. The sons fought like lions. Everywhere the little handful of Jewish patriots conquered. Legion after legion of the Syrians, led by the most renowned generals of King Antiochus, fell in battle, struck down by the small band of Maccabee soldiers. Nothing could withstand the prowess of these Jewish heroes; and, after a succession of victories, unbroken by a single reverse, they marched to Jerusalem, determined to crown their glories by rescuing the Holy City from the pagan hands that had desecrated the sanctuary. Here again they were victorious: for they drove out the Syrians from Jerusalem, once more regained possession of the Sacred Temple; and the remnants of the hosts of Antiochus gradually retired from Palestine.

Then, the soldier's work over, the priests' work, the purification of the desecrated Temple, began. Every

vestige of the idolatrous worship was removed; new altars were built, new holy vessels were set up, the lights on the sacred candlestick were once more kindled, and the ancient worship of the Most High was reëstablished. Then was celebrated the first "Feast of Dedication," with great rejoicing. It lasted eight days; and it was ordained that, forever after, the Jews should celebrate as a festival this wonderful escape and the religious revival that followed it.

How it is celebrated, is well known. For eight nights we illumine our homes with festive lights; commencing with one, and adding one daily till eight lights are reached. When these lights are kindled, joyful hymns of thanksgiving are sung to celebrate the salvation of Israel by the Maccabees.

The lesson taught by *Hanucah* is similar to that taught by *Purim*—the recognition of the Hand of God in human history and human destiny. One can well imagine the worldly-wise of the Maccabee age laughing at the temerity of Judas and his brothers, when they, with their handful of villagers, ill-clad, unpractised in the arts of war, and deficient in the implements of battle, went to fight the hosts of Syrian soldiers; just as Goliath laughed at the stripling David, and just as, in our own time, the worldly-wise of many nations predicted failure to the small band of Italian patriots, who undertook the liberation of their country.

And thus, this wonderful episode of our deliverance from the Syrian yoke shows us how Providence selects as instruments, not always the powerful and strong, but

sometimes even the weakest, humblest, and poorest, to work His will. To regenerate an expiring nation, to revive the fast-dying embers of a glorious religion, and to restore its influence, He selects the poor, weak, old priest, and his five sons—inhabitants of an obscure village of Palestine. These were to be the saviours of their people. These were to inspire their followers with the courage of lions to meet and conquer an enemy many times stronger than they. These were to rekindle the fire of religious zeal among their fellow-Jews. These were to drive out the idolater and to restore the true religion. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

CHAPTER XI.

THE FUTURE LIFE.

TO every one, even to those on the brink of the grave, life has many interests; and the *present moment* is of paramount importance. When God made man of the dust of the earth, He meant him to have earthly interests, so that he might fulfil his mission as part of the work of creation. If all men were to pass their lives like monks, spending all their time in penance, prayer, and contemplation, neglectful of their duties as members of the human family, there would soon be an end to the human race.

Happily for man, God has so constituted the human mind that the prevailing thought of life is life itself—life here on earth, with its needs, its duties, and its enjoyments.

But, deeply implanted as is the love of life in every healthy human heart, it is not more deeply implanted than the hope and expectation of a future state. It is a thought that crops up very frequently and persistently in every thinking mind; and no religious person should suffer the days to depart without bestowing more than a passing thought on the future of his soul.

What does Religion tell us about the immortality of the soul?

The Pentateuch tells us enough to show that Moses must have been well versed in the doctrine, and that the silence of the early books of the Pentateuch upon the topic was due only to the fact that the doctrine was thoroughly established. Indeed, if one reads any work treating of ancient Egypt, it is clear that, at the time of the Exodus, and even long before, the doctrine of a future state was known to the Egyptians, and played no small part in the inner and domestic life of that nation. It is, therefore, absolutely impossible that Moses, who was trained at the court of Pharaoh, could have been, as some have maintained, ignorant of the idea of the immortality of the soul.

But, it may be argued, Why did not God, through His servant Moses, clearly and distinctly propound the important doctrine of Immortality, promising undying happiness in a future existence as a reward of piety, and giving indications of the nature of those spiritual rewards, instead of promising long life and wealth, and all worldly blessings as the recompense of virtue?

Truly a difficult question. But we may probably find a solution of the problem by imagining a converse state of things.

Suppose that the Bible told us, without the slightest ambiguity, that there was an after-life, that the soul was an immortal part of man, which, released from its earthly bonds, would enjoy happiness, or be doomed to misery in accordance with its deserts. What would be the result?

In the first place, not a single disinterested action

would be left to be performed, even by the best of men. Every prudent man would calculate the effect of each good deed he performed, or of each temptation he resisted, and would, as it were, keep a debit and credit account with his Creator. Even as it is, there is not too much disinterestedness in the world. Intertwined with patriotism, we see ambition; intermixed with honesty, we find policy—the fear of the law; interwoven with religion, we often find submission to fashion. The sterling good deed, the act of duty, which is contrary to interest, to sentiment, to impulse, to fashion, and to inclination—this is the act which deserves eternal reward. But what act would be disinterested, if the promise of heavenly reward were unmistakably clear and distinct? The cool, calculating man would be the best man. But he would not be a good man in the sense in which we now understand the term. He would be commercially good; his good deeds would simply be good investments—investments of which the profit, though deferred, was certain—not only certain, but, when attained, eternal.

But there would be no merit in this kind of goodness. The object for which it would seem we are placed upon earth, would be annulled. This world would be no test, no place of trial, to ascertain our worth. It might be a test of our sordid prudence—not of our moral worth. The aim and object of our existence in this world would be frustrated.

Next, let us ask what end would have been served by a direct promise of immortality? It would not have

sufficed to have merely given the promise of a state of being which the mind cannot fully grasp. The mere promise of eternal happiness would have been to the majority the promise of a phrase—a mere vision—not a tangible, comprehensible reward. We could not appreciate a promise of pleasures which belong wholly and solely to a spiritual state of existence. But we can understand the pleasures of earth, because they are pleasures experienced by the agency of the senses. Every one can appreciate such pleasures; and therefore it is that we find, in the Bible, material blessings held out as the recompense of well-doing.

Our ancestors, just delivered from the slavery of Egypt, were not a people with strong spiritual cravings. The Bible represents them, while yet living amid miracles, as lamenting the flesh-pots of Egypt, looking back with fond regret to the time when they "did eat bread to the full," calling to mind, with greedy thoughts, "the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic." Men such as these would not have been attracted by promises of a spiritual happiness, long deferred. A different incentive had to be offered. They were, therefore, promised rich harvests and overflowing granaries, length of days and the blessing of children.

But, though the Pentateuch contains unmistakable hints as to the immortality of the soul, the later Scriptures contain much more than hints; sufficiently showing that the doctrine was not first learned in the Baby-

lonian exile, but that it was accepted, if not by the masses, at least by cultivated minds.

King David, in many of his psalms, uses expressions which show that to him the Soul's Immortality was no unfamiliar doctrine. In that beautiful psalm which is read in houses of mourning, he says, "My heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life; in Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

Again, in the 17th Psalm, called the "Prayer of David," after speaking with disdain of the prosperity of "men of the world which have their portion in this life," he closes with the words, "As for me, I will behold thy face by righteousness. I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

In the 49th Psalm, which contains so powerful a homily on the vanity of wealth and fortune, the Psalmist thus declares his belief in a future state: "But God shall redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for He shall receive me."

The last chapter of the Book of Ecclesiastes contains the most pointed reference to the doctrine of the Soul's Immortality in the well-known words, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

With such expressions as these in Holy Writ, who can assert that the doctrine of Immortality was un-

known to the ancient Hebrews, and that the Jews, at quite a late period of their history, derived their knowledge of that doctrine from heathen and Christian sources? The doctrine must have been not only known to our people in primeval times, but must have been so far recognized as a self-evident fact, and so far interwoven in their natural belief, as to have required no enforcement by the authority of Divine Revelation.

And who can talk of annihilation of the soul, especially in these days, when philosophers declare even matter to be indestructible, and force, by the conservation of energy, to be eternal in its effects. Shall physical force be everlasting, and the Soul which, by the power of Will, gives life to force, itself lack immortality? It cannot be.

The Rabbis tell us that when the Supreme Being, asked by Moses to show him His glory, caused all His goodness to pass before him, He opened to his astonished gaze the treasure-houses of Heaven, pointing out to him, one after the other, the rewards in store for the righteous; but that when at length He exposed to view one treasure-house larger than all the rest, piled up with precious things beyond number, and Moses, in rapt astonishment, exclaimed, "Lord, what is this great storehouse?" God answered him, "This is the storehouse of happiness for those who have no merit of their own."

Such is the Jewish view of God's mercy to the undeserving. And surely it is no extravagant idea, when we call to mind man's career on earth. He enters the

world helpless and naked. Loving hands receive him, tend him, clothe him, and feed him; loving hearts educate him; and however great the struggle of life, there is evidence, at every step and stage, of a Providence that guides him, unworthy though he be. Unworthy, indeed; for since none are free from sin, if God were a vindictive Being as some religions would represent Him, even the best of us would be struck dead long before we attained manhood. But He has no vindictiveness. He has declared that His ways are not as our ways; that, as the heavens are higher than the earth, His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts higher than our thoughts. And He has declared Himself "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." Surely He, who provided gentle hands and hearts to receive us on entering this world, will provide a loving welcome for the soul, released from its earthly habitation, whether it be the soul of the sinner, trembling for its future, or the soul of the pious, yearning for that perfection which the earth forbade.

And so when the time will come—as come it must to all—when death approaches, though the parting from loved ones may be with tears, and the severance of earthly ties may be with lamentations, yet let there be no fear in the soul, as it enters the presence of its Maker; for, merited or not, the loving mercy of God is the sure passport of every soul to heaven and happiness.

And yet the good will have the reward of their goodness; and yet the wicked will be requited for their wickedness; for God will by no means wholly clear the guilty. Man cannot be saved from the natural consequences of his sin. Of the reward in a future state we know nothing here; and still we may, perhaps, gain some slight foretaste of its nature from the sense of spiritual delight we experience after the performance of a truly good, unselfish act, involving heavy sacrifice. Of the punishment in a future state we can know nothing here; and still we may, perhaps, have some slight foreshadowing of its nature from the sense of remorse which follows the commission of a sin. Just as the grown man looks back on the foibles of his childhood and youth with contempt, and perhaps disgust, so may we well imagine the soul, released from its earthly habitation, burdened with remorse at its sins, until God shall have purified it from its earthly stains.

And as to the shares and proportions of reward meted out to each, though there will be Heaven for all, immortality for all, happiness for all, through the boundless mercy of God, the happiness will, perhaps, be greater or less, not according to the measure in which it is *bestowed*, but according to the measure in which it is *deserved*.

For it is the unselfish, disinterested work that is truly satisfying to God—the labor done without hope of profit, fame, or reward, the work wrought for the glory of God and the good of man.

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